

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post-Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

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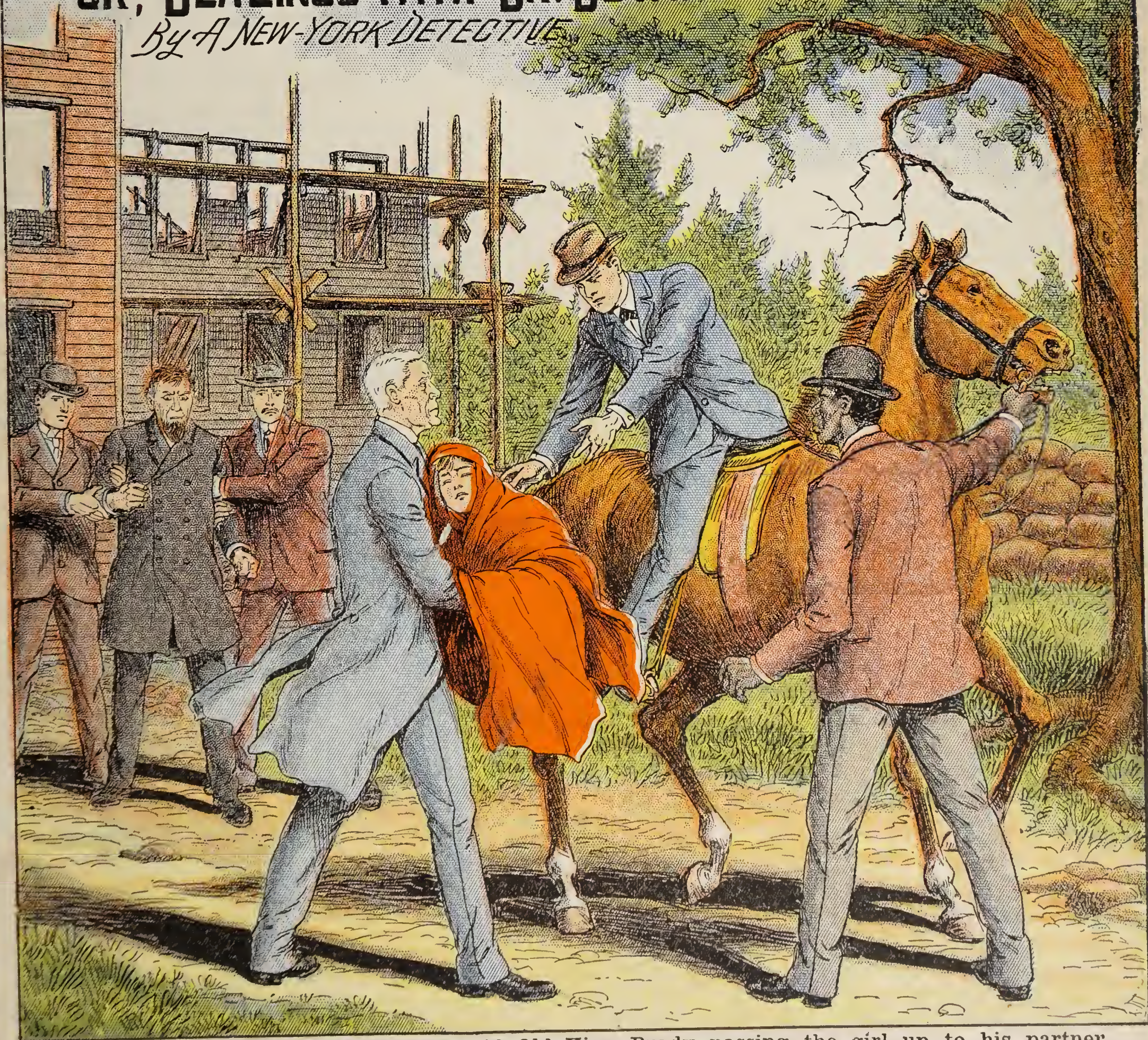
NEW YORK, JULY 27, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS' RACE WITH DEATH;

OR, DEALINGS WITH DR. DUVAL.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE



"Here, take the poor child, Harry!" said Old King Brady, passing the girl up to his partner.
"Hold that horse still," he added, for the animal was beginning to jump about. Dr. Duval stood glaring between the two men.

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CHAPTER I.

IS IT DEATH?

B-r-r-r! went the bell, and Young King Brady went to the phone.

"Hello! Hello!"

"Hello! Is this the office of the Bradys detectives?"

"Yes, it is."

"Is this Old King Brady?"

"Young King Brady. Who are you?"

"Dr. Duval, Isaac Duval, 999 Central Park West."

"Well?"

"Get the name?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

"To have Old King Brady call at once at 584 West 8—th street. Mr. Richardson. Get the name?"

"Richardson?"

"Right. When will he be there?"

"Can't say. He is not in now."

"This is a case of life and death. When will he be in?"

"Can't say. You had better get some other detective. Old King Brady cannot be depended on to keep this appointment."

"Good heavens, young man, don't you hear what I am telling you?"

"Well, I do, doctor."

"Then why do you raise all these objections. I want Old King Brady."

"Dr. Duval, do you imagine that Old King Brady has been sitting in his office all his life waiting for you to make this call?"

"H'm—well! Will he come?"

"He may and he may not. He does just as he pleases. I will tell him when he comes in, and then call you up. It's the best I can do, Dr. Duval."

"All right. Good-by!"

Young King Brady hung up the receiver, and tearing off the memorandum sheet on which he had made a note of the names and addresses, laid it on Old King Brady's desk.

"These doctors think they own the earth," he growled. "The Governor will never go."

But the "Governor" did go.

It came about this way.

In a few minutes Old King Brady came into the office.

The old detective was attired in his usual quaint costume.

He wore the old white cowboy hat with its enormously broad brim, the quaint blue coat with the double row of flat brass buttons down the front, and last, but by no means least, the antique stock and high, pointed, stand-up collar, style of 1840.

Old King Brady without these peculiar points of dress would not be Old King Brady.

He always appears thus when not in disguise.

"Well, Harry, any news?" he asked, as he hung the white hat on its accustomed peg.

Young King Brady, partner and pupil of the old detective, indicated the memorandum.

"Dr. Duval," said Old King Brady, glancing at the paper. "What does he want?"

"That you should call on a Mr. Richardson at that number. He was very fresh about it, too."

"He's a very fresh man, Harry. I was once up against him in a murder case—that was a little before your time. We had a hot session of it, and he swore to be revenged, but I still live. I want nothing at all to do with the man, unless, indeed, it might be to show him up for the insolent fraud and fakir that he is."

"Do you consider him a quack?"

"My faith in all these fashionable doctors as a class is extremely limited. They tell you one thing to-day, and another to-morrow. I know nothing special about this man's skill."

"He said it was a matter of life or death."

"He did, eh? Did he say who was to live or die according as I responded to his orders?"

"No. You were to call on this Mr. Richardson; that is all I got."

"Let me think a minute. 584 West 8—th. Why, Harry, that must be the closed house. Yes; I am sure it is."

"What do you mean by the closed house?"

"It is an old mansion, the last of its kind on that block. For many years it has remained closed up. I have been told that an old, old man lives there alone with a couple of colored servants. I forget the name, however. The church of St. Gabriel stands on the next lot. Just look in the directory, and see what number that is."

Harry consulted the directory.

"It is 578," he announced.

"Yes, yes! That is it! The house stands in grounds; there would be a couple of lots between it and the church. Yes; it is surely the closed house."

"Well?"

"I think I'll go. I like to know all about New York

mysteries, and that house has been one of them these many years."

"Shall I call him up?"

"Do so, please. Say that we will come right away."

Harry gave the call.

Without difficulty he got the doctor on the wire.

"He says he wants you alone, Governor!" he said, looking away from the phone.

"Tell him it must be both of us or neither."

"All right."

Harry made the announcement, and hung up the receiver.

"What did he say?" demanded the old detective.

"All right."

"Was he fresh this time?"

"He was dictatorial in his tone."

"He was, eh? It would give me a whole lot of pleasure to trap that old scoundrel. Well, perhaps my time has come. We'll start right along."

It was fortunate now for Dr. Duval that he caught Old King Brady with no case on his hands.

Had it been otherwise this story would never have been written.

As it was the Bradys turned up at No. 584 West 8—th street in half an hour's time.

It was, as the old detective had supposed, the famous closed house.

This ancient frame mansion, standing well back from the street in the midst of an old-fashioned garden filled with flowering shrubs, had long been a mystery to the neighborhood.

Of course it was known to all interested in the real estate of the neighborhood that the house was owned and occupied by a Mr. Albert Richardson, a man of extreme age, who would listen to no proposition to dispose of his property.

But to the flat dwellers all around this was not generally known, and the house bore the reputation of being haunted, while with the servants of the neighborhood, the bent white old man occasionally seen at the upper windows was considered a terrible wizard.

Many would cross the street rather than pass directly in front of the old mansion.

Such was the standing of Mr. Albert Richardson and his house at the time of which we write.

Old King Brady looked the place over for a few minutes, and then said:

"Harry, before going in here I think we had better find out a little something about this house and its occupants from someone in the neighborhood. Don't you?"

"Well, perhaps it would be a good idea," Harry replied.

"It can do no harm, at all events. Let us walk up to the avenue. There is no such great haste."

"But don't you think it would be just as well for us to get in there before Dr. Duval comes?"

"Well, I did have that idea, but really I don't know

that it makes any difference. We may do better by posting ourselves first."

"All right. It is just as you say, of course."

They walked back to the avenue.

There was a drug store on the corner, and Old King Brady proposed that they go in there.

"We may be able to pick up a point or two of the druggist," he said. "Very likely whatever prescriptions Dr. Duval gives his patient are filled here."

They entered the drug store.

Several customers were being served, and they were obliged to wait for a few minutes before they could get the attention of the druggist.

At last he turned to them, and asked their business.

The druggist was a young man, and proved to be a particularly intelligent person.

"So you are the famous Old King Brady," he said. "Certainly, I'll give you any information I can. What is it that you want to know?"

"It is about the closed house, down the block."

"Oh, well, that is considered something of a mystery in this neighborhood."

"It is occupied by a man named Richardson, I am told."

"Yes; a very old man. They say he is nearly a hundred."

"Does he own the property?"

"Oh, yes. They tell me that he is enormously rich."

"Are you acquainted with the old gentleman?"

"Not at all. Nobody in this neighborhood has ever made his acquaintance, I understand."

"Then he never goes out?"

"No; he is past that. He is very feeble. He is a man who has met with some great sorrow, I fear."

"And lives the life of a hermit?"

"Exactly."

"Who are the other inmates of the house?"

"Just two colored servants."

"Both women?"

"A man and a woman."

"Old or young?"

"Old. The man is nearly as old as Mr. Richardson himself, I believe. Still, he is hale and hearty. He often comes in here for medicine."

"Who is attending Mr. Richardson?"

"Dr. Duval."

"Has he been attending him right along?"

"Well, no; only recently. But what is the trouble there?"

"That I don't know yet. We were summoned by Dr. Duval to meet him at Mr. Richardson's. He did not state why. I thought I would like to post myself a little about these people before I tackled them—that is all."

"I fancy you will be the first strangers who have been admitted there in many a long day."

"Just a few questions more, doctor, in the strictest confidence."

"Well?"

"This time it is about Dr. Duval."

The druggist rather demurred.

"I don't like to talk about doctors, Mr. Brady," he said. "I make my living out of them, you know."

"Exactly: I shall regard it as an especial favor, and one to be returned."

"Well?"

"What sort of a man is Dr. Duval?"

"In what way? How do you mean?"

"Is his standing of the best now? It was not at one time, as I happen to know."

"He has his friends and he has his enemies. Some think a great deal of him."

"Pretty arbitrary sort of character, isn't he?"

"Well, he does about as he pleases," replied the druggist, with a smile, adding: "I had rather have him for my friend than my enemy."

"I fancy so. He has been connected with more than one queer transaction in the past. I was curious to know if he had been in trouble of late."

"Not that I have ever heard of."

It was clear that the druggist did not propose to talk of Dr. Duval.

For this Old King Brady could hardly blame him.

The detectives now left the drug store and started back toward the closed house.

"I am afraid we have wasted our time, Governor," remarked Harry.

"Well," replied Old King Brady, "we certainly have not learned anything of any particular consequence."

"I should say not."

"Still, we know with whom we have to deal."

"What can this old man want of detectives?"

"That is the problem which we are now about to solve."

"Hello! Is that Dr. Duval's carriage ahead of us?"

"No; it looks like a doctor's carriage, but it is passing the house. Well, here we are again."

Old King Brady opened the gate, and with his partner walked up the gravel walk toward the closed house.

Every window on the lower floor was concealed behind heavy green shutters.

Upstairs there were slatted blinds, and in every instance closed.

"How long has it been this way, Governor?" asked Harry, as Old King Brady pulled the bell.

"Ever since I can remember this part of town," was the reply. "But in the old days it was not so noticeable, for the neighborhood was not at all built up. Ha! Someone coming. We have no difficulty in getting in, it appears."

The door was opened by an old colored man, whose wool was as white as snow.

"You will be de detective?" he muttered, looking the visitors over. "Am dat right?"

"That's right, uncle," replied Old King Brady. "Dr. Duval sent us here."

The old man frowned.

"Dr. Duval!" he muttered, under his breath.

It was all he said.

But the look on his face and the tone in which he said it made it very plain to the Bradys that he was no admirer of Dr. Duval.

"Come in!" was what the ancient one said aloud.

He closed the door behind them, locked it, and put up a bar and chain.

"Doctor hasn't came yet, sah!" he said. "I'se gwinter say a word ef youse willing to take a hint from de only man on yeth who lubs de master ob dis yere house."

"Say it, uncle. I will never give you away."

"Doan' keer whedder yo' do or not. It's just dis: Doan' wait fo' de doctah lak he tole me to tell yo' to do, but go right upstairs now, an' see ole Marse Rich'son alone while yo' hab de chanst."

"Right, uncle. We will follow your advice if you will show us upstairs."

"One only, bos. He berry bad. Yo' get him excited mebbe he die."

"All right. Harry, you had better wait here."

The hall ran entirely through the house, and was as wide as an ordinary room.

It was fully furnished with sofa, tables, chairs, bookshelves packed with books, and cabinets filled with curiosities from land and sea.

The furniture was of ancient pattern, and would have driven a collector of antiques wild.

Everything was scrupulously clean, and bore evidence of careful attention from a woman's hand.

Old King Brady now followed the old darky to the floor above.

Here the man threw open a door on the right in the rear.

The room within was darkened, and for the moment Old King Brady could make out nothing.

As he passed in he perceived that he was entering a perfect museum.

The walls were lined with curiosities.

Stuffed birds in glass cases, cabinets filled with shells, butterflies, beetles, coins, etc.

There were a dozen bookcases at least, open affairs reaching from floor to ceiling.

Every available bit of wall space was hung with oil-paintings, mostly of small size.

"Big value here," thought the old detective, as his eyes became accustomed to the gloom.

There was no bed in the room, properly speaking, but over in one corner was a bamboo couch upon which lay a man of immense age.

His hair was yellowish white—that strange tinge that only comes in the eighties.

As he lay on his back, with upturned face, Old King Brady thought that he had never seen a countenance so wrinkled.

The deeply sunken eyes were closed, the hands were folded across the breast.

Thus the figure on the couch, with its unearthly whiteness, made more apparent by the white bedclothes by which it was covered, looked for all the world like a corpse.

The old darky bent down and called.

"Hey, ole marse! Marse Rich'son! Wake up, marse! De detectives done come!"

There was no answer.

Not a muscle of that awful face moved.

Old King Brady drew near and looked down upon the figure.

"Marse! Ole marse!" called the darky. "Yo' hev to call him tree or four times fo' yo' kin wake him," he said.

"How old is he?" asked Old King Brady.

"Gwine on a hundred, boss. He'll be a hundred years old de tenth of next mont' ef he libes."

"Does he lie so most of the time?"

"Nearly always so, boss. Gets wuss an' wuss. Once in a while he gits up. Doan' neber look at him books and him c'lections now no more. Dey uster be de joy of his life. It am twenty years sence he has been on de street, boss. Marse! Hey, ole marse! Wake up, will yer? De detectives am came!"

Still there was no answer—no sign of life.

Old King Brady put out his hand and laid it on the wrinkled forehead.

It was deathly cold.

"My friend, there's no use in calling him," he quietly said. "Neither is there anything that I can do for this man—he is dead!"

CHAPTER II.

OLD KING BRADY TRAPS DR. DUVAL.

The old darky showed no surprise at the detective's announcement.

"Mebbe so, sah, an' mebbe not," he replied. "Yo' doan' know ole marse. Lots of times him lie dis yere way fo' hours togedder, an' me an' mah ole woman we tink de good Lawd done tak him home. But no! Ebery time he come to life agin. Mebbe he will dis yere time, mebbe he won't. I kean't tell, but when de Lawd does git him he gits a good man, an' doan' yo' mak' no mistake."

"What does Dr. Duval say about him?"

"Same's ebery odder doctah, dat he will go off lak dis yere some day: dat he may go any moment. Dis yere's a new doctah. Our ole Dr. Jones, he died tree mont's ago, an' Marse get Dr. Duval. I doan' like him, boss, I tell yo' dat straight."

"Ha! And why?"

"Dunno. Kean't tell. I tinks he's allus a-schemin' an' a-schemin'."

"Is this man rich?"

"Rich! Mah good gollys, boss, he am worth millions. He owns houses and mines and bonds. He owns a hull street down in Richmond, Virginny, whar him an' me were born, and neber a hair to leave it to, 'cept cousins and nephews who doan' care no more fo' him dan dough he was a dog. Dat's why I fear. Some ob dese fine days dey'll done help ole marse ober de ribber, so dey will."

"Did he have no children, then?"

"One, Miss Helen. She's dead an' gone dese many years. She runned away and got married to young Marse Beveridge. Ole marse trowed her off. He never seen her from dat day. But she am dead, and Marse Beveridge he's dead, and de gal she's dead; deyse all dead but ole marse and me an' de ole woman."

"Meaning your wife."

"Yas, sah! Ole mistress she's dead dese forty years. See what comes of habbin' on'y one chile. Ef ole marse had had a dozen some ob 'em would be alibe to look after him now."

"Can we do nothing?"

"Nuffin' what I knows of. I'm mighty sorry it's dis yere way. Ole marse he got a lot of letters lately, he git some bee in him bonnet. He want to talk to a 'tective. He ax Dr. Duval who's a good one on'y dis morning. Doctah, he say Old King Brady. Specs dat's you?"

"That is me."

"Jes' so. I'd er heap rudder yo' seen him fust. Specs doctah ebery minute. I doan' like dat man, an'——"

"Hush! Someone coming!" interrupted Old King Brady.

A step was heard in the hall, and a second later a door was thown open, and in walked a stout, middle-aged man with a heavy black beard.

"Ha!" he exclaimed. "You are prompt!"

"Dr. Duval!" returned Old King Brady, with a slight nod of his head.

"Yes. You remember me, I see! It is several years since we met."

"Ten, if I recollect right."

"Something like that. We did not part the best of friends upon that occasion, Mr. Brady. I suppose, however, that with you, as with most men, business is business, and you can brush bygones to one side."

"If I did not feel that way, Dr. Duval, I would not be here now."

"Exactly. I saw a young man downstairs. Your partner?"

"Yes."

"Let him stay there. Sam, what about your patient?"

"Yo' see him a-lyin' dere, doctah. How I should know? A hundred times he lie like dat, an' I tink he am dead. Dis yere gemman he tink he am dead. How I should know?"

"We have to deal with a very peculiar case here, Mr. Brady," said the doctor. "For the past two weeks I have practically been running a race with death. Excuse me a

moment. I will proceed to make my usual examination. It may be, indeed, that he is gone."

The doctor bent over the couch.

He listened long and attentively at the heart of the aged man.

"He still lives, but his vitality is lower than I have ever seen it," he remarked, when at last he turned away.

"Can anything be done?" inquired Old King Brady.

"We can only make the attempt," was the reply.

Producing a medicine case, Dr. Duval prepared a dose in a glass of water.

This he forced between the parted lips.

Old King Brady watched and saw that the stuff was swallowed.

"It is wonderful! The natural heat seems to be all gone from his body," he remarked.

"Yes: but it will return."

They waited.

In a few minutes a slight flush appeared on the cheeks.

Next came a twitching of the eye-lids, and then the eyes slowly opened.

Sam watched it all unmoved.

He had seen it many times before, and was prepared for the end which sooner or later was bound to come.

The eyes roamed from one face to another, and finally settled upon Old King Brady.

"You are the detective?"

The words seemed to come from a distance.

It was the most peculiar voice Old King Brady had ever heard.

"I am the detective," he quietly replied.

"I—want—to—talk—to—you—alone."

"That will be dangerous, my dear Mr. Richardson," said Dr. Duval. "You had better let me remain with you during the interview."

"No."

"But, my dear sir——"

"I am still master of my own house. I say no!"

"You can hardly be aware how near death you were just now."

"I am glad you called me back. How long?"

"How long what?"

"How long am I good for?"

"I cannot tell you. Of course, if you excite yourself——"

"Dr. Duval, I could not excite myself if I tried. I am in the hands of Death, but, mark my words, I will not die until——"

"Well, sir! Well?"

"No matter. I hire you to look after this old worn-out body of mine, not to meddle in my family affairs. Oblige me by leaving the room."

"But, my dear sir——"

Slowly the old man raised himself.

Sam flew to help him.

"Push me back against the wall!" he gasped.

Sitting up now, he raised a trembling right hand, and pointed to the door.

"Go, doctor," he said. "Do not make me trouble. Go!"

There was nothing for it but to obey.

The doctor departed.

Old King Brady would have been but a poor reader of faces if he had failed to see that the man was furious.

Mr. Richardson now turned his eyes upon him and said:

"I was dreaming. I dreamed that you came and that there were two of you. Where is the other one?"

"Downstairs."

"Let him be summoned. Sam!"

"Yes, marse!"

"Show the young man up."

Sam departed.

"How did he know he was young?" Old King Brady asked himself.

In a moment Harry appeared.

"Good! Young, strong, brave!" murmured the centenarian. "Just what we want. Two good men. Listen to what I say."

The talk which followed consumed half an hour, so slowly did the words come.

At the outset Old King Brady opened the door to see how the case stood outside.

Here he found Sam.

"That's right. Stay here. Don't let the doctor come near the door," the old detective said.

"Yo' bet I won't, boss. He won't dar'!" was the reply.

"Now, then, Mr. Richardson," said Old King Brady.

"Listen," was the reply. "I am dying. I am very rich. Millions are involved. I have made a will leaving all to my great-grand nephew, Henry Porter, and yet I hate him. I will not let the property go to strangers. My daughter married against my will. I cast her off. She died. Her child, a daughter, married, and died twelve years ago. She had a child, also, a daughter. I was told that she was dead, therefore I made the will. You follow me?"

It is impossible to express the painful slowness with which these words were uttered.

"Perfectly," replied Old King Brady. "Proceed, my dear sir."

"I was told that the child, Helen Ramsay is the name, was also dead. Porter told me. Now I have reason to believe that he lied. If so, he gets nothing. Helen—the third Helen, my great-grandchild, gets all. You must find her. You must bring her here. It will be a race with death!"

"We will do our best, sir; but you may live many months yet."

"No. My time has come. I have been told by—by those I see in my dreams, that in three days I shall pass away. You must act promptly or it will be too late."

"Why not make another will now, providing for this emergency?"

"No, I shall not. I would see this child. If she is my grand-daughter I shall know it, and I will then make my

new will; if it comes too late let it stand as it is. Porter, though I hate him, is of my own blood; he shall get all."

"But what are we to do? Where are we to look for this girl?"

"Wait! Dr. Duval! Beware, I mistrust that man. Porter sent him to me. Do you think he would poison me, Mr. Brady? Speak your mind?"

"I cannot tell you. Like yourself, I distrust the man."

"Well, let it stand. I will find some way to circumvent them. I will think of what you say. Perhaps I will send for my lawyer and make a new will, providing for little Helen even if I am dead before you can get her here, if you can furnish proof of her identity."

"It will be far the best way, sir. But where——"

"Wait!"

Mr. Richardson put his hand above his head, touched a button, and an electric bell buzzed outside.

Sam came in on the instant.

"Lock the door," said the old man.

The door was locked.

"Help me up!"

"Ole marse, yo' kean't walk. Let Sam do it fo' yo', ole marse, dear."

"Help me up!"

Sam got him on his feet.

"So!" he crooned. "Yo' do better dan I tought. Lean on yo' ole slabe. He doan' let yo' fall!"

It was painful to watch it all.

Little by little Sam got him to a desk, and seated in a chair.

Slowly he opened a drawer and thrust his arm far in.

There was a click, and the lid of the desk flew up.

The old man fumbled in a pigeon-hole, and drew out a bunch of letters.

"Mr. Brady!" he feebly called.

"Yes, sir!"

"Take these letters. Read them. They will tell you all that I know in the matter. I have not been able to answer them. Day by day I have been waiting for strength. At first I doubted. Now I believe. Do what you can, and do it quickly, for it will be a race with death."

Old King Brady took the letters, and put them in his pocket.

"I will study these later," he said.

"Right. You want money. I will write you a check."

"No matter. Some other time."

"No. I insist. How much shall it be?"

"But, my dear sir——"

"Don't cross me. Will a thousand dollars do for a retainer?"

"It will be ample."

"Very good. There will be more coming if you succeed. Don't watch me. I must take my time."

Slowly—very, very slowly—the check was drawn.

Old King Brady looked upon the old man wonderingly.

"He lives on his strength of will solely," he said to himself.

"Here is the check. Now leave me," said Mr. Richardson. "Do not attempt to see me till you have finished unless it is absolutely necessary. Shake hands. Good-day."

Old King Brady pressed his hand.

When it came to Harry the old man held his hand for an instant.

"Watch over him!" he said. "Something tells me that there is danger ahead. Now go!"

Old King Brady was standing by the door; suddenly turning the key, he threw it open.

It was as he had expected.

There on his knees outside the door was Dr. Duval.

CHAPTER III.

THE BRADYS BEGIN THEIR RACE WITH DEATH.

Dr. Duval, with his face fiery red, scrambled to his feet. Harry passing out after his partner, the door was quietly closed.

"Good day, doctor," said the old detective. "We are going now."

But the doctor was not to be shaken thus easily.

He followed them downstairs.

"One moment, Mr. Brady," he said when they reached the lower hall.

"Well, sir?" demanded the old detective, turning upon him.

"I suppose you think you caught me in——"

"In the act of listening at the keyhole? Yes, sir," the old detective broke in.

"You put it abruptly, but I shall not attempt to deny it."

"It would be quite useless to make such an attempt."

"I shall not make it, nor shall I offer any apology. I stand on my rights. That is a very rich man in there, Mr. Brady. I as his physician may think best to humor him, but I have a perfect right to know all that he does."

"And says?"

"Yes," replied the doctor, brazenly. "And says. What are you going to do about it, then?"

"Nothing at all. I trust you were interested in what you heard."

"No matter what I heard or did not hear. I know my business."

"And I know mine."

"Mine is to learn of anything which is likely to distract the mind of my patient. I ask you what commission Mr. Richardson has placed in your hands?"

"And I, in turn, Dr. Duval, ask you a question."

"Well?"

"Do you regard Mr. Richardson as insane?"

"Most certainly."

"Then I do not, and I am just as good a judge as you."

"I have answered your question. Do you propose to answer mine?"

"Decidedly not."

"You will regret it. There are large interests at stake here, Mr. Brady."

"So I judge."

"It will pay you best to get on the winning side and to stay there."

"Meaning on the side of Mr. Henry Porter, named in Mr. Richardson's will as his sole heir?"

"Just so."

"You know the gentleman?"

"Most assuredly."

"Is he a resident of New York?"

"He is."

"Then why not let him speak for himself?"

"Perhaps he will. He is a very liberal man, and it might—yes, it will—pay you to let me put you next to him."

"In order that he can bribe me to lose this race with death?"

Dr. Duval shrugged his shoulders.

"I understand," continued the old detective. "I shall not enlarge on my own honesty, Dr. Duval. I simply say in plain English that I am not to be bribed. I think, with one other remark on my part, we may consider this interview closed."

"As you will."

"Do you want to hear my remark?"

"I said as you will."

"Then let me warn you to have a care that you don't help us to lose our race with death. Dr. Duval, that is all I have to say."

"You insolent old fraud!" cried the doctor, shaking his fist in Old King Brady's face, "you shall pay dearly for those words."

"And you, sir, shall be held strictly responsible for the conditions found at the autopsy which I shall cause to be made on the body of that old man upstairs when he dies," retorted Old King Brady. "You have your warning, Dr. Duval. It will be well for you to remember that I am a power in this town."

This ended the war of words.

The Bradys now withdrew.

"Great Scott! you ought to have arrested him, Governor," cried Harry when they gained the street. "I wouldn't trust that man as far as here to the lamp-post. He will poison the old fellow sure."

"No, he won't. He has had his warning," replied Old King Brady. "I know the man. He is a coward at heart."

"Cowards are sometimes dangerous propositions."

"That old man's warning has stirred you up about me, Harry. Let it drop."

"Do we read the letters?"

"Certainly. Right now. Let's get in somewhere and sit down."

They walked over to Columbus avenue and entered the cafe of a well-known hotel.

Here Old King Brady produced the letters. They were four in number.

We shall give them in the order of their dates.

LETTER NO. 1.

"Baywood, L. I., July 1st, 190—.

"Mr. Albert Richardson:

"Dear Sir—I write for information. It may be important to you to answer my question, and I trust you will do so. Are you the Albert Richardson who many years ago lived in Richmond, Va.?"

"Did you have a daughter named Helen, who married one Beveridge?"

"The daughter of this Helen, also Helen, married William Ramsay, in London, Eng.

"Kindly inform me on these points and I will tell you something which you may like to know.

"Yours truly, HANNAH HUNT.

"You can address me care Dr. Slimsides, Baywood Retreat, Baywood, L. I."

LETTER NO. 2.

"Baywood, L. I., July 9th, 190—.

"Mr. Richardson:

"Sir—You did not answer my letter. Very well. You may think it to your advantage not to do so, but I want to let you know that you are mistaken.

"I have made inquiries about you and I find that you are the man I want.

"Perhaps you do not know that William and Helen Ramsay left a daughter after their death.

"Such is the fact. This girl, Helen Ramsay, is your great-granddaughter. I am informed that you have no nearer kin and that you are nearly a hundred years old and worth several millions. Don't you think it is up to you to do something for the child who is now living in a dependent position? I think so. If you think so then write at once.

Yours truly,

"HANNAH HUNT."

LETTER NO. 3.

"Baywood, L. I., July 12th, 190—.

"Mr. Richardson:

"Still you decline to answer my letters.

"I want you to understand that I can prove all I claim. Perhaps you think that I am working for a stake for myself in this matter.

"I will be perfectly frank with you. So I am, but I don't expect to get it from you, but from little Helen, who is in my charge. This child has her rights. I am going to see her righted. If you don't answer this letter you will regret it.

HANNAH HUNT."

LETTER NO. 4.

"Baywood, L. I., July 18th, 190—.

"Sir—You do not heed my warning. Now, this is the last call. Either you make terms with me or I shall send my lawyer to you. Either you make terms with him, or he will take steps to have you declared an imbecile and have a guardian appointed for your property in the interest of Helen Ramsay, my charge. This is the last call. You had better write to me and save trouble. I hold the proofs.

"HANNAH HUNT."

Old King Brady having read these letters aloud, folded them up and put them in his pocket.

"Blackmail, think?" questioned Harry.

"Just as likely as that the claim of this woman is founded on fact."

"She can't have been very well posted about Richardson or she would have known that he was unable to write."

"But he isn't unable to write, Harry. He wrote that check for us. He could have written the woman a postal card asking her to call on him or on his lawyer. His mind moves slowly. He has just got round to it. From what he told us, I should judge that he intended to write from the first."

"You will go to Baywood, I suppose?"

"First train."

"Where is the place?"

"On Hempstead Harbor, opposite Glen Cove."

"It is too late for the boat?"

"Yes. We must take a train."

"Know this Dr. Slimsides?"

"No. Never heard of him. It will be just as well for us to find out something about him before we start out, though."

"How will you get at it?"

"I can get at it right now. Dr. Fanning, Secretary of the New York Medical Society, knows all these people. He is in his office most of the time. I will call him up on the 'phone."

Old King Brady did so, and after getting into communication with Dr. Fanning, which he promptly succeeded in doing, the following conversation ensued:

"Yes. I have a record of Dr. Slimsides, but I do not personally know the man."

"Does he stand well?"

"As a physician he is regularly entered on our books. I know nothing of his skill."

"But his character?"

"Is this to be held confidential?"

"Strictly so, doctor."

"Then, in confidence, I will tell you that he does not."

"What kind of a place does he keep?"

"Sanitarium; it is very quietly conducted and his patients are rich people. He is under suspicion by this society."

"In what way?"

"There have been several escapes reported from his place, but none of those who have escaped have ever been found."

"Ho! Is it as bad as that?"

"Yes. We would like to trap him. If you can give us any evidence we shall be greatly indebted to you."

"You shall have any that I may get."

"May I ask if he has come under your suspicion?"

"Oh, no. I am looking up a person who has her mail addressed to his care. I never heard of the doctor, but I propose visiting his place at once."

"Very well. Remember us if you find anything against him. We are gunning for his sort all the time. Frankly, from what I have heard I don't think Slimsides would balk at murder if he got his price. Good-by."

"Hold on."

"Yes."

"Another question in strict confidence."

"Well?"

"What is the standing of Dr. Isaac Duval, of this city?"

"Mr. Brady, I prefer not to answer that question over the telephone. Dr. Duval is a very prominent physician."

"You have said enough. Good-by."

"Wait."

"Well?"

"Duval is not dealing with Slimsides, is he?"

"Not that I know of."

"Let me know if you find that he is, will you?"

"Certainly."

"Good-by."

"Good-by."

"Well?" demanded Harry as Old King Brady hung up the receiver.

"You want the report on Dr. Slimsides?"

"Yes."

"A man who would not balk at murder is the word I got."

"Then I think we had better get a quick move on."

"Decidedly. We will start now and begin our race with death."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST LAP IN THE RACE.

And so the Bradys started for Baywood.

They took a train for Roslyn, and there hiring a horse and buggy drove over to Baywood.

Their way led them through one of the garden spots of Long Island.

Baywood as a village amounts to nothing.

There is only one store and a blacksmith shop.

At the latter Old King Brady inquired for Dr. Slimsides' retreat.

"Why, it is down on the shore road," replied the black-

smith. "It's the old Hopper place turned into a private madhouse."

"You know the doctor?"

"No; nobody knows him. He don't have nothing to do with nobody in this town."

"I see. Not popular, then?"

"Nope. He don't trade with us. Everything he buys comes by boat. All his patients come and go on his private yacht. It's my opinion the place ought to be looked after. The screams and yells heard over that wall nights are something awful. I've heard 'em myself many a time, so I ought to know."

"They tell me that several persons have escaped from Dr. Slimsides' place lately."

"Have, eh? 'Waal, then, I hain't heard nothing about it. I tell you, boss, we in Baywood don't know nothing about the man, and, what's more, we don't want to."

"I see."

"Hold on. What are you asking me all these questions for?"

"Oh, I am a reporter writing up sanitariums. Ged-dup!"

Old King Brady shook the reins and away they went.

"This doctor, like most of his kind, seems to be a law unto himself, Harry," he remarked as they drove on.

They took the shore road running in full view of that charming sheet of water, Hempstead Harbor.

Soon they came to a point where the road struck away from the edge of the bluff.

Here a piece of woods began and presently they came to a high stone wall, the top of which was covered with broken glass.

"This is the place," said Old King Brady.

A few yards further the wall gave way to an iron fence thirty feet in height.

Behind this at the end of a beautiful lawn dotted with shrubbery stood an old stone mansion with high wooden columns in front.

The wall ran down to the house on both sides, the fence cutting off the lawn from the road.

There was a big gate in the middle and a driveway leading to the house.

The Bradys dismounted, and having hitched their horse touched the electric button at the side of the gate.

"The wire must run underground," remarked Harry.

"Evidently."

"What a gloomy place?"

"It is free from neighbors at all events. Woods opposite; I see no house below here. Grounds back on the bay. Just the place for Dr. Slimsides' peculiar business, I should say."

A man now appeared, coming down the driveway.

He was evidently a foreigner. Old King Brady put him down as a Russian or a Pole.

He came up to the gate and in a gruff voice, but with a manifest effort to speak civilly, said:

"You vant doctaire?"

"Yes, Dr. Slimsides. Is he at home?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Me no know. Me see. Card!"

Old King Brady passed his personal card between the bars.

The man pulled off his cap, and making what was intended for a bow returned up the driveway.

"The usual style of these private madhouses," remarked Harry. "Bet a dollar we don't get in."

"Perhaps not."

"What did you give him that card for? I'd have given him a false name."

"No, no, Harry. We may as well hit the doctor in the open, first call. It will be time enough for disguises and false names later. We'll get in all right."

And so it proved.

In a few minutes the man returned with word that Dr. Slimsides was in and would see the Bradys.

The gate was accordingly opened and the detectives conducted to the house, where they were shown into a small reception-room.

Here they were kept waiting only a few moments.

Then came a dapper little man, with smiling face and an oily tongue.

"I am Dr. Slimsides, gentlemen," he said. "You, I take it from the name and business indicated on this card, are the famous Brady detectives. Is it so?"

"That is right, doctor," Old King Brady replied.

"Just so. Pleased to make your acquaintance."

"May I ask to what I owe this pleasure? If you wish to look over my place you are welcome. All open and above board here, gentlemen. Always open to those who want to know what sort of a business we conduct."

"It isn't that at all, doctor. We represent a party who wishes us to confer with a woman named Hannah Hunt, whose mail comes addressed to your care."

"Yes? She was my housekeeper."

"Was? Then she is not here now?"

"You have said it. She left me without warning yesterday. I don't know where she has gone."

"So? You can give me no address to which I can apply for information?"

"No. I got the woman from an intelligence office on Sixth avenue which has since gone out of business. I haven't the remotest idea who her friends are."

"Unfortunate. By the way, Mrs. Hunt has in her charge a young girl, I believe?"

"She had her daughter with her while she was here, a young girl of about ten years."

"By name Helen?"

"Yes, I believe so. I never paid any attention to the child."

"How long has Mrs. Hunt been in your service?"

"About a year—a little over a year."

"Just so. Now, doctor, as it is of the highest importance for me to communicate with this woman, strain a point and try to help me. How did she leave here?"

"She was taken to Glen Cove, across the harbor, in a boat, sir. There she took a train."

"We may be able to trace her in that way. Well, we must not detain you."

"Oh, you are not detaining me. Would you like to look over my place?"

"No, I think not. We will get right on the move."

"Very well. Sorry I can't help you, Mr. Brady."

"Mrs. Hunt is an English woman, is she not?"

"Yes, she is. I am quite sure she has no friends in this country. I never heard her speak of any."

"Why did she leave?"

"She would give no reason. I liked the woman and I paid her good wages. I was all taken aback when she told me that she was going away."

"I see. Well, we must go and——"

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in," said the doctor.

A woman entered with a white, scared face.

"Doctor, Mrs. Hunt wants you at No. 20 right away!" she panted. "Mrs. Burton is going on awful. It is all Mrs. Hunt can do to hold her."

Dr. Slimsides' face flushed.

"I will be right along," he said. "You may go."

The woman retreated.

"This puts one in a very awkward situation," said the doctor. "I dare say you think I have been deceiving you, Mr. Brady, but the person to whom that woman referred is another Mrs. Hunt, one of our nurses. If you do not believe me I beg you will let me send the nurse to you so that you may question her for yourself."

"Not at all. Of course, we would not dream of doubting your word, Dr. Slimsides. Good day."

The Bradys were shown out by the doctor.

"Call again, gentlemen," he said, shaking hands. "Come at any time. Meanwhile if I learn anything of Mrs. Hannah Hunt, I will surely notify you. I have your card."

The foreigner was on hand to escort the Bradys to the gate, and he watched them until they were out of sight.

"Come! That's the worst ever!" exclaimed Harry. "Governor, of course there is but one Mrs. Hunt."

"Not of course, Harry, but probably so. It may be all straight."

"I don't take any stock in that doctor."

"Why?"

"Too balmy."

Old King Brady laughed.

"He's a slick one, I've no doubt," he said; "but we will find means to circumvent him. First, though, we must make sure if Mrs. Hunt is there."

"How can it be done?"

"Easily enough, I fancy."

"But how?"

"You observed that there was a telephone in that office?"

"Yes."

"We will call the woman up."

"Can we work it?"

"I think so. I'll pretend to be her lawyer. If she has really engaged one it will work. If not, she can be depended upon to say something to give herself away."

"Why not pretend to be some lawyer representing Mr. Richardson?"

"H'm! That isn't a bad suggestion. Let me turn it over in my mind a minute. I only see one objection."

"Well?"

"Has it occurred to you that Dr. Duval might have warned Dr. Slimsides of our visit?"

"Yes; I thought of that."

"We must look at the situation both ways. Assuming that Dr. Duval is acting in the interests of this man Porter, which I believe, and that in some way he has caught on to the scheme of this Hunt woman, which I also believe, then he would do either one of two things."

"Try to stand in with the woman or try to head her off."

"Exactly."

"We want first to find out which is true. Neither may be, but upon consideration I think your suggestion is a good one, Harry. We will wait until about supper time, when the doctor will be likely engaged at the table, and then call the woman up."

This being decided upon, the Bradys took up their quarters at the hotel at Roslyn.

It was already well on in the afternoon when they arrived there, so they had not long to wait.

At half-past six Harry called the sanitarium up on the 'phone.

He had done no talking, and there was little chance of his voice being recognized, whereas Old King Brady's might.

To Harry's disgust, he got the doctor himself on the wire.

"Yes, Mrs. Hunt is here," was the reply to the first question put.

"Can I talk with her?"

"What is your name?"

"Anderson."

"What is your business?"

"I should prefer to tell Mrs. Hunt."

"She is engaged. This is a large house. It will take time to communicate with her. I must be prepared to tell her what you want."

"Say to her that I am a lawyer, and that I wish to speak to her about the Richardson matter."

"Very well. Hold the wire."

"How does it work?" demanded Old King Brady, who stood behind his partner while this was going on.

"Not at all, I am afraid."

"What's the trouble?"

"I have been talking to Dr. Slimsides."

"Pshaw! Well, you did just right, I think——"

"Hush!"

"What's the matter?"

But Harry held up his finger and listened.

Something unexpected was coming over the wire.

"Hello! Hello!"

"Hello!"

"Whoever you are, save me! Save me! Take me away from this dreadful place. They are going to murder me! I believe they are going to do it to-night!"

"Who are you?"

"My name is Charley Martin. I'm only a boy. I'm not mad! I—oh!—oh!—oh!"

The last was a cry of agony.

That somebody had jumped suddenly upon the speaker and struck him Harry knew, for he heard the blow come simultaneously with the cry.

"What is it?" demanded Old King Brady.

Harry explained.

"Some patient probably. No doubt the doctor treats them badly enough. Such places as his fatten on the rich who want to get rid of their disagreeable connections. However, we have nothing to do with that."

Again Harry held up his hand.

A woman's voice was speaking.

"Quick! Listen!" came the call, hurriedly spoken. "I am Hannah Hunt. I am being held a prisoner here. Help me! Be under the bluff in a boat after midnight, when I shall try to escape. They have stolen the child, and—hush! They are coming. I shall have to talk for a bluff."

Then in a calm voice there came:

"Hello! Hello! I can't hear you! Oh, yes, Mr. Richardson. I don't know the name. No, I am not Hannah Hunt. That was the housekeeper. She left yesterday. All right. Good-by."

All this without a word from Harry.

Young King Brady hung up the receiver.

The telephone was close to the hotel desk.

The Bradys could not talk there, so they stepped out into the open.

Seating themselves on the piazza, Harry told what he had heard.

"It's great!" said Old King Brady, after a moment's thought.

"It's all your doings, Governor. That was a bright idea."

"Yes," replied the old detective, "but it never would have worked in the wide world if it had not been for your lunatic. Because Dr. Slimsides was taken up with him Mrs. Hunt was able to get in her fine work. We have made the first lap in our race with death."

CHAPTER V.

THE NIGHT WATCH ON HEMPSTEAD HARBOR.

Old King Brady, lighting a cigar, put his hand in the armholes of his vest and paced up and down the piazza.

Harry let him alone for the time.

The old detective always has to have a chance to think it out.

At last he sat down and resumed his talk.

"Harry, I am well satisfied with the turn affairs have taken," he said. "I consider that we have made a good start."

"And yet nothing may come of it, Governor?"

"Surely. We are dealing with a man whose business is unquestionably shady. We must expect trouble. Still that woman showed herself to be up to snuff. She may succeed in her plan of escape."

"What about the child?"

"The fact of the child having been taken away from the woman shows me conclusively that the person we are really dealing with is Dr. Duval."

"I believe it. He's a scoundrel, all right."

"A hired scoundrel. The head scoundrel is probably this man Porter."

"Shall you look him up?"

"Later perhaps; certainly not now."

"You will stay and go on **the harbor to-night?**"

"Yes. For better or for worse, that shall be our plan."

"How will you arrange it, start from here?"

"I think not. There is a hotel at Glenwood, on the other side of the harbor. I propose that we take a train for Glenwood, register at the hotel, talk about night fishing and get out on the harbor on that excuse."

"Glenwood stands low in reference to Baywood?"

"As I remember the place, I should say it was nearly opposite. The harbor is of no great width. There is an island there under the cover of which we can do our watching. Yes, I think that is certainly our best plan."

The train was due to start in a few minutes, so the Bradys paid their bill and walked to the station.

The run was only a matter of a few miles.

In a short time the detectives turned up at the Glenwood hotel.

It was crowded with guests and they were informed by the landlord that they could not have a room.

"It will really make no difference," said Old King Brady, blandly. "If you will rent us a good boat it is all we want. We came here to do a little night fishing. We can sleep on the island if we get tired. I suppose you can give us breakfast in the morning all right?"

To all of this the landlord readily agreed.

And so the Bradys went fishing.

The first thing they did when out on the harbor was to pull over to the other shore.

It was now about half-past eight o'clock.

They could see that the sanitarium was a somewhat larger building than they had at first supposed, as there was a long extension in the rear of the old mansion.

It came almost down to the edge of the high sand bluff.

On either side of the grounds in which it stood the wall extended to the very edge.

Thus no one could easily leave the place except by water.

To facilitate this there were steps leading down to the beach, where there was a little pier.

A bit of wire fencing extended right and left from the head of the steps, which were guarded by a gate.

Lights burned in several of the windows of the sanitarium, and people could be seen strolling on the lawn and along the edge of the bluff.

One man they could see was in military dress.

He came to the edge of the bluff, and shaking his fist at the detectives shouted something which they could not catch.

All at once he gave a fiendish yell and began jumping up and down.

Another man now came hurrying towards him, and taking him by the arm led him away.

"There's a lunatic for you all right," said Harry.

"Undoubtedly," replied Old King Brady. "But, come, we must make a pretence at fishing at all events."

They dropped anchor and threw out their lines.

"Let's see, is there a moon to-night?" questioned Harry after a moment.

"No, and we are going to have a dark night of it," replied Old King Brady. "It is beginning to cloud up now."

"So much the better for our plans and the plans of this woman."

"Yes. We don't want to show ourselves, of course. We may have to do so, though, to a certain extent."

Snapping mackerel, as they are called down that way, were biting lively and during the first hour the Bradys caught a good many fish.

They kept a few, but threw most of them back into the water, not wishing to encumber the boat.

By nine o'clock the people had all gone inside and the detectives could see nobody on the bluff.

They now changed their position and dropped further down the harbor.

Here they remained for a short time, and then, rounding the point of the island, went ashore on the other side, where they lay down on the grass and remained until midnight.

It turned out as Old King Brady had said.

By eleven o'clock the sky was entirely overcast and it seemed to threaten rain.

The tide was running out.

Old King Brady, who always keeps the run of such things, announced that it would be low water at one-twenty.

The upper part of Hempstead Harbor is very shallow at low tide.

Only in the channel, which is on the east side of the island, is there any depth of water when the tide is out.

The Bradys put in time as best they could, and at twelve o'clock they got into the boat again and pulled around towards the sanitarium pier.

They were able to approach very near to it without running the risk of discovery on account of the darkness.

The sanitarium was now in darkness save for two bright lights which burned behind windows about the middle of each story.

The Bradys concluded that these were hall lights, as they probably were.

"There is no earthly chance for that woman to get away from here unless she makes a swim for it or we take her," remarked the old detective.

"And do you know," he added, "that I don't somehow think we are going to get her, after all?"

"What makes you say that, Governor?"

"Oh, I just feel that way."

"One of your impressions?"

"Call it so if you wish. I feel as if it was all going to turn out differently, and that we were going to get someone else."

Often Old King Brady takes queer notions of this sort.

Very frequently, it must be admitted, his impressions turn out to be correct.

They hung about in the vicinity of the wharf for more than an hour, but there was nothing doing.

It was getting to be tiresome work, and Harry began to growl.

"If you want my impression it is that nothing at all is going to come out of this," he said at last.

"Do you say so! Look, then!" retorted the old detective. "Down in the bottom of the boat with you. Quick!"

Harry is prompt to obey, and he followed the example of his chief and crouched down.

There was little danger of the boat being seen, owing to the darkness, for it lay low in the water and was over under the shadow of the island.

Two men had suddenly appeared on the bluff near the gate at the head of the steps.

They carried something heavy between them, and that something looked most suspiciously like the body of a man.

It was easy for the detectives to see, for one of the pair had a stable lantern slung on his arm.

Quick as thought Old King Brady got out the powerful night glass which he always carries.

Resting this upon the gunwale of the boat, he took in the doings at the top of the steps.

The burden had been dropped while the gate was being opened.

Then the pair picked it up again and started to descend the steps.

"One of those men is Dr. Slimsides, Harry," Old King Brady announced.

Then it was:

"Great heavens! they have got a man wrapped up in something just as sure as fate."

"Governor, is it murder?" Harry exclaimed.

"I'm afraid so. Remember what Dr. Fanning said over the telephone about the mysterious disappearances which have taken place here?"

"Can we do anything?"

"We must make an effort. Better strip, Harry. I can't swim. It all rests with you."

"What do you propose?"

"We want that bundle."

"Of course, whoever it may be is dead already."

"Why, certainly. They would hardly throw a live person overboard. Hurry! Hurry! The tide is still running out; it may be swept away."

Harry stripped with all haste.

Meanwhile the pair had paused at the end of the pier.

They seemed to hesitate and were evidently talking.

Just as Harry got his undershirt off they raised the thing between them and dropped it into the water.

There was no hesitation after that.

Both turned and hurried back up the steps.

"Over with you, boy!" cried Old King Brady. "Not that I think you can do anything, but at least you can make the try."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRADYS WIN ONE RACE WITH DEATH.

Young King Brady is a splendid swimmer.

Swimming under water is his special trick.

He expected to be called upon to do it on this occasion.

But things went differently.

The tide was almost out now, and, as it happened, right off the doctor's pier there was only about three feet of water.

We have spoken of the channel being on the east side of the island. By that we meant the main channel used by the little steamboats which ply between the harbor and New York.

But there was also a wash channel on the west, a small affair, but with a fairly swift current on the ebb tide.

It was into this channel that the object had been thrown.

The distance from the beginning of the channel line was about a hundred feet.

All these conditions Young King Brady knew perfectly.

The Bradys make it their business to study conditions, and they had been taking these in earlier in the evening.

"They intend to let the corpse float away on the ebb tide," thought Harry. "If I want to catch it I must cut in ahead."

He accordingly struck off at an abrupt angle.

Covering the distance with a bold, overhand side-stroke, his progress was rapid.

Most fortunate was this, as will soon be seen.

In a moment Harry struck the channel, and stood upright in the shallow water, which here was hardly above his neck.

At the same instant something came up against his legs with considerable force.

"The corpse!" thought Harry. "By gracious, I am just in time!"

He put down his hands and clutched it.

The thing was indeed a human body.

It appeared to be strapped or tied to a narrow board cut to a sharp point, which projected beyond the head of the corpse, which was enclosed in a rubber sheet.

"What's this for?" thought Harry, as he ran one hand over the rubber while with the other he steadied the board. "Can they have thrown him over alive, after all? By gracious, it looks that way!"

He clutched the board with both hands, and lifted it up out of the water.

He whistled.

Instantly came the answering whistle from the old detective.

For a second Old King Brady's electric dark lantern flashed, covering Harry and his singular burden.

"He sees me," thought Young King Brady. "It is only a question of a minute now."

He ran his hands over the rubber and found that it was pasted together with some sort of cement, completely enclosing the body within its folds.

There were two weights attached to the board.

Apparently these had been closely calculated, and were just heavy enough to keep the thing below the water.

The sharpened end of the board answered all the purpose of a prow.

As soon as the corpse struck the main channel it would quickly drift out into the sound.

And while Harry was taking in all these points, Old King Brady was coming on with the boat.

In a moment he was within hailing distance.

"Are you there all right, Harry?" he called.

"Right here, Governor!"

"Got him?"

"You bet, if it is a him."

"Dead or alive?"

"Don't know. Hurry up. I'm sinking in the sand."

Old King Brady lost no time in working the boat alongside.

"Help me, Governor! I can't lift it in alone," Harry said.

Between them they managed to get the board and its burden into the boat.

Harry climbed in, and hastily explained the matter to Old King Brady.

"We will pull for the island at once," said the old detective. "The chances are against our seeing anything of Mrs. Hunt to-night."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because with these goings on at the sanitarium she would hardly dare to attempt to make her escape."

"We can keep a watch out for her from the island."

"Surely. This can only be a boy or a young girl in that bundle. Strange way of handling a corpse."

"Very neat and artistic."

The object is to prevent its rising to the surface, and yet to insure its drifting to sea, I suppose."

"Likely."

"What kind of wood is that board—can you see?"

Harry bent down and examined it.

"White wood, I think," he declared.

"The very thing to become water-logged, it is so porous. After all, I guess it is a pretty good contrivance."

"Of course, the poor fellow is dead."

"I can hardly doubt it, and yet, as you suggested, it might be a girl—the girl, in fact. So I'm inclined to believe."

"It is just as liable to turn out to be that unfortunate boy who called me over the telephone. Don't you remember I told you he said: 'They mean to kill me to-night?'"

"Great Scott, Harry! That's a fact!"

"Hurry, Governor! The poor wretch might be alive inside of that rubber, after all."

"Cut the rubber instantly. It is possible."

Harry, who had not yet found time to dress, fumbled in his trousers' pocket, got out his knife, and carefully cut the rubber.

A slit big enough to insert his hand was all he needed. This done, he easily tore the thin stuff away.

"It's a boy, Governor! The body is perfectly warm!" he exclaimed.

"Dastardly work!"

"I should say so."

"It's a boy about fourteen or fifteen years old; take a look at him."

"I see, I see! I should have to put on my other glasses to get a good look at his face."

"I smell ether here!"

"Yes, yes! I smelled it as soon as you opened the rubber. Put your hand on his heart."

The body was entirely naked.

The face was a handsome one, the hair, yellow and curling, the hands were those of a person not accustomed to hard work.

Harry felt for the heart.

"Why, it is beating regularly!" he exclaimed.

"He'll live all right, then. He is etherized—that is all."

"It is a wonder he didn't smother done up in that rubber bag."

"The lungs are full of the ether. There was no demand for air for the moment, but he would have been dead in a very short time."

"A dastardly crime!"

"Indeed, yes! We have got Dr. Slimsides foul now. I'm ready to swear that he was one of those two men."

"Same here; there was no mistaking the little runt. Can I do anything here?"

"No. Let him alone. My opinion is he will come to in a minute. I don't know of anything you can do."

They had reached the island now.

Old King Brady ran the boat up on the sand, and Harry, jumping out, dragged it up further.

The old detective stepped out, and taking the boy in his arms, carried him back to where the grass grew.

There was a faint moan as he laid him down.

"He'll come around all right, Harry," said the old detective. "I think you had better deal with him alone: the young for the young every time. I'll stay by the boat and watch for the woman. This is a queer case. Which ever way we turn it seems to be a race with death."

So Harry stood by and waited after dressing.

It was a warm night. There was not the least danger of the lad taking cold.

"If he does come back to life what in thunder are we to do with him. We shall have to get clothes for him somehow," Young King Brady thought.

It was nerve-racking business watching so.

As the minutes dragged by Harry began to despair, but at last the lad heaved a deep sigh and, opening his eyes, threw out his hands.

This was the first of it.

It was five minutes before the eyes opened to remain so.

The boy stared at Harry and muttered:

"Don't kill me, doctor. Please don't kill me! I'll be good."

"You are not with Dr. Slimsides now," said Harry, quietly. "You have escaped from his clutches and forever, I hope."

"Escaped! Oh, that would be too good!"

The boy sat up on the grass.

"Who are you, and where am I?" he panted.

"You are on the island out in the harbor. You know the island, Charlie?"

"Yes, yes! You know me?"

"You are Charlie Martin."

"Yes, yes! But who are you?"

"I am the man you talked with over the telephone."

"Oh, I jumped in there when I saw my chance; but he beat me—he beat me terribly, afterwards."

"I know! Your body is all black and blue in places. I saw that. Does your head feel better now?"

"It feels kind of buzzy. They made me take something, I guess it was chloroform. I don't remember anything after that. Did they try to kill me?"

"Indeed they did. Would you like to hear about it?"

"Yes, yes! Tell me."

Harry explained, speaking very gently and with no show of excitement.

"This boy is no more crazy than I am," he thought.

"The Governor must hear what he has to tell."

Charlie stared at Harry while he talked.

Then he tried it. He said: "I heard him talking it over with Tom McCormick; that's what scared me so."

"Who is Tom McCormick?"

"He is one of the nurses, orderlies they call 'em. Say, only for you I would be dead."

"For me and Mr. Brady, that old gentleman standing there by the boat."

"Oh, it's dreadful. Say, do you think I am crazy?"

"No, I don't think so. I don't think anything of the kind."

"Well, I'm not. Would have been, though, if I had stayed in that dreadful place much longer, and that's no dream. Is your name Brady, too?"

"Yes; but you can call me Harry."

"I am so glad you got me. Oh, so glad!"

"Naturally. Nobody wants to die. Now, you must tell me all about yourself. I am going to call Mr. Brady up so that he can hear, or perhaps you will walk down where he is?"

"I think I can walk well enough; but what am I going to do about clothes? I feel so ashamed."

"We'll fix that all right. You mustn't mind Mr. Brady. Come on!"

They joined the old detective on the beach.

He spoke kindly to Charlie, who tried to say something in the way of thanks.

"Never mind about that, my boy," said Old King Brady, cutting him short. "Tell me something about yourself. How did you come to be in that asylum? You don't appear to be insane."

"Indeed, I am not, Mr. Brady. It's an outrage. My cousin did it. He put me there."

"Where do you belong?"

"In San Francisco. My father and mother are dead. Father died a year ago, and left me in charge of Jim Martin, who he made my guardian. My father was a very rich man, Mr. Brady. He left over five million dollars, and the whole property goes to Jim in case I die."

"Ha! I see. Did he treat you badly?"

"No, he didn't do that. I was at school at Santa Clara, and I was taken down with a fever. I was delirious for a while, and when I came to myself they had me in an asylum."

"I see!"

"It was dreadful. I tried to make the doctor who ran the place understand that I was not crazy, but he wouldn't listen to me. I appealed to him in every way I knew, and begged him to send for Cousin Jim, but he would not. They stole my letters, and kept me locked in a room. I tried to escape, but I was caught and brought back again. Oh, I have had an awful time."

"Did you never see your cousin after you went to the asylum?"

"Never! I begged them to send for him, but they wouldn't. I know he is at the bottom of it all."

"And how came you here?"

"The doctor, his name was Cole, sent me here with two keepers. I was locked in the stateroom of the Pullman car all the way. They drugged me, Mr. Brady, and every time we changed cars I didn't know a thing about it. From the time we struck New York till I came to

myself in Dr. Slimsides' place I never knew a thing. I don't even know where I am now."

"Dastardly business!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Did they treat you badly there?"

"Not until to-day. I overheard a conversation between Dr. Slimsides and Tom McCormick, the orderly in the ward where I was. They were plotting to drown me. I was dreadfully scared when they caught me listening, and then they beat me horribly."

"There is no doubt that this is a plot on the part of your cousin to get possession of your property."

"I am sure it is. Can you help me, sir? If you could take me to New York where I could see a lawyer——"

"Of course I will help you, Charlie. I am a detective. I can fix it all."

"Oh, are you Old King Brady, the famous detective?"

"That is who I am."

"Oh! Then this is the luckiest thing that could possibly have happened to me. For the first time in months I begin to feel safe."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BRADYS TRY A BOLD GAME.

It was pitiful to observe the subdued, half-affectionate fashion in which Charlie Martin talked.

The little fellow was hardly up to the average brightness of a boy of his age, but to say that he was insane or showed any signs of so being was the merest nonsense.

"What shall we do with him?" demanded Harry. "Shall I go over to the hotel and get him clothes if I can?"

"Wait a minute," replied Old King Brady. "Let us think. We have struck a peculiar situation, and we don't want to make any mistake."

"I wish you would get me away from here just as soon as ever you can, Mr. Brady," pleaded Charlie. "Remember, I am worth a whole lot of money. I'll pay you anything if you will only see me righted."

"We are going to do it," replied the old detective. "Never mind about the pay, but in the meantime we have got other work to do."

"In the meantime I have got to have clothes."

"Yes, yes; you will get clothes all right. It won't hurt you a bit to go naked a hot night like this. Before it comes daylight we will have you dressed and far enough away."

"That's all I want."

"Then pay attention to the questions I am going to ask you. Perhaps you can help me."

"I will if I can, you bet."

"Do you know Mrs. Hunt?"

"The housekeeper—oh, yes."

"Are there two Mrs. Hunts?"

"Not that ever I heard of. Of course, I didn't go on the women's side. There might be a nurse of that name."

"This housekeeper had a daughter, a girl about your age?"

"Helen?"

"Yes."

"I know her. I used to play with her every day in the yard there by the bluff. They took her away day before yesterday. Mrs. Hunt had trouble with Dr. Slimsides."

"What about?"

"I don't know. You see, I had the run of the house, except on the women's side. I heard them quarreling in the doctor's office. Mrs. Hunt got awful mad. She called the doctor all kinds of names. There was another doctor there, too. I couldn't hear what they said, for I didn't dare to go close enough, but when Mrs. Hunt got to sassing the doctor I heard her, she yelled so."

"About this other doctor?"

"He took Helen away in a carriage—at least so I was told."

"What did he look like?"

"He was a tall man with a big black beard."

"You didn't get his name, I suppose?"

"I heard Dr. Slimsides call him by name, but I forget what it was just now."

"Would you know if you heard it, think?"

"Mebbe I would."

"Was it Dr. Duval?"

"Sure! That was it. I remembered just as soon as you spoke."

"Governor, this is great!" cried Harry. "After all, it seems, we are bound to have dealings with Dr. Duval."

"I suspected it would pan out that way. Now, let me go on, for the night is advancing. I've got a plan in my head, and it may be too late to carry it out. Charlie, how could we get into the doctor's place if we went across there? Can you tell me that?"

"I don't know any way but by the door. They have all the windows barred."

"You mean the back door, which opens on the bluff?"

"Yes; there are two, one leading into the basement, and one at the top of the back steps opening off the piazza you see there."

"Are these doors guarded at night?"

"The upstairs one is. There is always someone watching it. I don't know anything about the lower door. That leads into the kitchen, and I was never down there."

"Who is the watchman?"

"Oh, they take turns. One is Tom McCormick, the fellow I told you about, the other is a new man. I don't know his name."

"Charlie, I suppose you wonder why I am asking you all these questions?"

"Sure. It isn't any of my business, I suppose."

"Well, I can't tell you the whole story, but I'll tell you this much: it concerns little Helen. The child is, as we believe, in much the same situation as yourself, heir to a

lot of money, and she is in the hands of those who would kill her if it paid them to do so. I want to save her if I can."

"Why, Mr. Brady, she is only the housekeeper's daughter."

"She is not her daughter—at least we so believe. We are going over there to try to get hold of Mrs. Hunt, who, I believe, is being held a prisoner."

"They'll kill you!"

"No, they won't. We are officers of the law. They will think twice before they do that. Tell me, now, how the house is arranged inside, so that we may know just what to do."

Charlie did his best to comply with Old King Brady's request.

As it was he conveyed a pretty clear idea of what they would have to encounter to the detectives.

"And are you willing to stay here till we come back?" asked Old King Brady. "We will try to bring clothes with us. We will take you away then."

"Suppose you never come back?" replied Charlie. "That would leave me in an awful fix."

"No; it won't. If we should be so unfortunate as to fail and not return, I tell you just what you do. Stay in the woods till morning, and then go out on the beach on the other side, and call across to the Glenwood House for help. Somebody is sure to hear you. They will send a boat after you. Then you can tell all that happened to-night, and about our being detained at Baywood by Dr. Slimsides. The people about here hate the doctor, and they will be only too glad to find a chance to jump on him. You will see."

"I must do just as you say, I suppose, Mr. Brady," replied the boy. "But I shall be worried to death every moment that you are gone."

"Don't worry. Get up by the woods and go to sleep on the grass. A hot night like this you can't catch cold, and if we are successful we shall be back in a very short time. Come, Harry, push off the boat, and we will go across."

Not until they had started did Harry venture to speak.

Young King Brady very rarely offers any objection to the plans of his chief.

"This is a bold game you are undertaking, Governor," he now said.

"It is all of that," was the reply.

"Don't you think you are running a terrible risk?"

"I am, of course. I know that. Still, the notion has seized me to try it."

"Don't you think there is a chance that the notion may seize that watchman or somebody else over there to shoot us as burglars?"

"There is that chance; but then we can do something in the line of pistol practice ourselves."

"Well, I am not kicking; but what's your object? To bring off Mrs. Hunt, I judge, from the way you questioned that boy."

"That is it, of course. We may succeed, and we may

fail, but for better or for worse I'm going to try it. You don't have to go in. If you want to you can remain by the boat."

"As though I would do such a thing! Don't talk nonsense. Where you go I go, of course."

The conversation ended there.

Harry felt but little like talking, and in a time like this Old King Brady usually has nothing at all to say.

His eyes were everywhere.

Harry knew that nothing could escape him, and he pulled across until they were almost at the pier.

"Land on the left and pull the boat up on the beach," ordered Old King Brady.

Silently Harry obeyed.

"Now we will climb up on the pier and lie flat for a few moments," said the old detective.

They did it with as little noise as possible.

Lying flat was rather a misnomer.

What they did was to crouch on the pier, keeping their eyes on the sanitarium.

In this position they remained until Old King Brady gave the word to change, and that was not until ten minutes had passed.

"I don't hear a sound, and I don't see a soul stirring, Harry," he finally whispered. "I think we are safe to make a move."

"Where first?"

"We will get into this little shed on the pier here first. I have the usual supply of good strong cord in my pocket, but I want to see if we can't lay our hands on some rope. We may need it before we get through."

The door of the shed proved to be unsecured.

Inside were boxes and barrels.

Evidently it was here that Dr. Slimsides' goods were landed by the private yacht the blacksmith had spoken of.

Prowling about the Bradys soon found all the rope they wanted.

There was a bunch of new clothesline, and this Harry having thrust into his pocket, they started for the house.

Reaching the broad steps leading up to the piazza, they again halted, waiting full three minutes in plain sight of anybody who might be taking them in from the windows.

The two lights still burned in the halls, but aside from that this end of the sanitarium was in darkness.

Nothing happened.

Again Old King Brady got on the move.

He first turned in under the piazza, intending to try his luck at the lower door.

But in this he was balked, for a door of heavy wire cut off the area, and there was another door leading into the house beyond.

"Nothing doing here, Harry," he whispered. "We must try the main door."

They tip-toed up the piazza.

"Very quietly Old King Brady tried the door, not only once, but several times.

"We are in luck, Harry!" he breathed. "This door is

neither bolted nor barred, but only fastened on the lock, and the key is not in it. I expected no such luck as this."

"Shall I look through the key-hole? With that light burning inside I ought to be able to see something in there."

"Do so. Not a sound now! All depends upon our caution."

Harry squinted through the keyhole.

In a minute he raised up and whispered:

"I see a man sitting in a chair asleep."

"Good! I am convinced that luck is with us. Here goes for a try at the lock."

Old King Brady now got out his skeleton keys.

Very, very quietly he worked.

At last there was a slight click, and Harry knew that the trick was turned.

Old King Brady opened the door.

They found themselves looking into a long hall which ran the length of this extension to the main building of the sanitarium.

Seated on a chair near the door, with his head resting upon his breast, was a man.

He was sound asleep, and breathing heavily.

"This fellow has been drugged," thought Old King Brady. "I understand! It was necessary for the doctor to drug him so that he could get in his fine work. He will lay the escape to him."

He whispered these thoughts to Harry.

"I'm going to tie him up," he added. "Stand by, now."

It was running an awful risk.

If the man sounded the alarm then there would be trouble.

Old King Brady stepped up to him and pushed his head back against the wall.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BRADYS CAPTURE DR. SLIMSIDES.

If the man had awakened Harry was ready with his revolver.

But he did not wake.

He only grunted and slept on.

Quick as lightning Harry thrust a handkerchief into his open mouth.

There was a little sputtering and still the man slept on.

"Drugged, sure," whispered Old King Brady, "but we'll tie him up just the same."

He got the rope from Harry and without in the least disturbing the sleeper soon had him secured.

Again they waited.

The man slept on.

He must, indeed, have been deeply drugged to take the treatment the detectives gave him and not awake.

"I think we are safe to make a move, Harry," Old King Brady whispered in his partner's ear.

Harry nodded.

Old King Brady, who had fixed in his mind the description of the interior of the house given him by Charlie Martin, passed through the corridor and opened a door on the right.

This communicated with a passage in which were the stairs leading to the rooms overhead.

Dr. Slimsides occupied rooms in the main building, Charlie had stated, so the old detective hardly anticipated meeting him. It was the keeper, McCormick, whom Old King Brady most feared.

He drew his revolver and tiptoed up the stairs.

Harry crept after him.

At the top of the stairs they came to two doors.

Charlie had told of these.

The one on the right hand led to the women's ward, the other to that of the men.

Very cautiously Old King Brady tried the right-hand door.

"This is not locked," he whispered in Harry's ears. "We will venture in. Not a sound! Follow me."

Old King Brady threw open the door and the light from the women's corridor streamed forth.

Suddenly Harry saw him make a rush.

There was a smothered cry and Old King Brady reappeared at the door before Harry could get to him.

He had Dr. Slimsides by the throat and was backing through the door with the revolver pointed at the little man's face.

Instinctively Harry covered the doctor.

"You vile murderer, I am going to let go of your throat now," breathed Old King Brady, "but if you make the faintest sound my partner will shoot you dead."

'It is doubtful if the doctor ever heard him.

His face had grown deathly white and he sank down unconscious at Old King Brady's feet.

"You've choked him to death," whispered Harry.

"Nonsense!" was the reply. "I looked out for that. The man has fainted, that's all. Here, lend me a hand."

They picked the doctor up and carried him into the corridor.

There was no one to be seen.

In the distance a woman's voice broke into a weird song.

It was a lunatic in one of the rooms which, with grated doors before them, opened off on both sides of the corridor.

"What shall we do?" whispered Harry.

"Tie him up. Take him with us," replied the old detective. "I don't propose to bother with the woman now. If we can secure the head of this infernal institution nothing will be done to Mrs. Hunt which has not been already done."

Without losing an instant, Old King Brady thrust a handkerchief into Dr. Slimsides's mouth and tied his hands behind him.

Then he waited for the man to revive.

This happened in a minute.

The little doctor was the picture of abject terror when he looked up at the detectives.

It is ever so with such people.

A man who will practice cruelty on the unfortunate is always a coward at heart.

Old King Brady caught him by the arm and pulled him roughly to his feet.

"Downstairs with you," he whispered.

The doctor lost no time in obeying.

But his knees seemed to bend under him.

Harry caught him by the arm and guided him down.

"To the boat," said Old King Brady.

"Aren't we looking for clothes?" whispered Harry.

"Never mind. We will attend to that later. Come."

They passed the sleeper in the chair.

The doctor glanced at him and groaned.

Without delaying, the Bradys ran their prisoner to the boat, put him aboard and pulled off.

Once Harry had started, the old detective removed the gag from the doctor's mouth.

He half expected a torrent of abuse, but none came.

The doctor just sat there with that same white, scared look upon his face, staring at the old detective.

At last he spoke.

"Am I under arrest?"

"You most certainly are," Old King Brady replied.

"This is terrible! Terrible! To think that I am going to lose the position I have struggled so hard to obtain."

"You should have thought of all that before you murdered young Martin, Dr. Slimsides. It is too late now."

"You can prove nothing against me! It is impossible."

"Oh, indeed we can! We saw you throw that boy into the harbor. What is more, we recovered the body and have it now."

The doctor groaned.

"Dreadful! Dreadful!" he murmured. "To think that it should ever come to this!"

"What is dreadful? That you have been murdering your patients right along or that you should be found out?"

Again the doctor groaned.

"It is the last, of course," said Old King Brady. "A man who can do what you have done has neither heart nor conscience. To you the dreadful part of it is that your wicked career is at an end; that you should have been suddenly jacked up by the strong arm of the law."

"But it isn't too late yet," said the doctor in a wheedling tone. "I am not a rich man, Mr. Brady, but I have influential friends. They say every man has his price: if you—if you will name yours, be it ever so high, I can raise the money, and—and——"

"And you cannot bribe me, you scoundrel. That's all there is about it," was the blunt reply. "If you was to offer me a million dollars it would be no inducement for me to turn you loose."

Again the doctor groaned.

"Then I'm done for," he said. "I wish you would shoot

me and tumble me overboard. I'd rather be dead than to face this charge."

"No, you wouldn't. You are too big a coward for that. But here we are at the island. Now we will go ashore."

As the doctor sat he was facing the island.

Suddenly he let out a yell.

It was the boy Charlie.

Emerging from among the trees, he came towards the boat.

"You are back!" he cried. "You have captured the doctor! Good! Good!"

Slimsides heaved a sigh of relief.

No doubt he thought he had seen a ghost.

"Yes, we have got back, Charlie," cried Harry. "This is the time you get your revenge."

"I don't know that I want revenge. I want what belongs to me, and I don't want to be locked up in that horrible place again."

"No danger of that, my boy," replied Old King Brady. "You will get all that is coming to you and so will the scoundrels who have conspired against you. Stand up, Dr. Slimsides. Step ashore."

The doctor stumbled in getting out of the boat and fell on his nose.

Harry roughly pulled him to his feet.

"So you see, the boy is alive, after all," said Old King Brady. "Your crime this time has been foiled."

"I am thankful for it."

"Under the circumstances, yes. It was a well planned disappearance, doctor. In this case the victim has reappeared, but it has not been so in the other cases."

"You know nothing of any other cases."

"And you know nothing of what we know. Harry, go over to the Glenwood Hotel, rouse up somebody, get clothes for this unfortunate boy and have them telephone for the Constable or Deputy Sheriff, or whoever runs the arresting business around here."

"Don't do it," pleaded the doctor. "Take me to New York. Don't let me fall into the hands of these people who hate me so."

"Enough talk in that line," replied the old detective. "I am master of this situation. I do as I please."

Harry pulled away in the boat.

Charlie meanwhile was staring at the doctor in silence.

"Go back into the woods or along the beach, Charlie," said Old King Brady. "I want to talk to this scoundrel alone for a few minutes."

"Ah, you are going to listen to reason then?" exclaimed Dr. Slimsides when the boy was out of hearing. "I tell you, Mr. Brady, I can raise——"

"Stop! You mistake my intentions entirely," broke in the old detective. "I am, however, going to give you a chance to get off with a lighter sentence than would surely be your fate if I chose to push matters."

"Well?"

"I am satisfied, Dr. Slimsides, that you are a murderer many times over, but I shall make no allusion to the

rumors I have heard about you when I hand you over to the authorities if you will truly answer a few questions for me now."

"Well?"

"You have been dealing with Dr. Isaac Duval lately?"

"Wait a minute. Who are you working for? Who sent you to my place?"

"I am working for Mr. Albert Richardson. I came to your place through letters written by the Hunt woman, whom you are holding a prisoner over there now."

"As I thought. You telephoned Mrs. Hunt this evening?"

"Yes."

"You have no interest in the case of that boy?"

"I had none. It is not so now."

"He is insane."

"He is not, and you know it. Don't try to sidetrack the issue, doctor. I am offering you the only chance you will get from me."

"What is it you want to know?"

"I want you to truly answer my questions. Are you or are you not working for Dr. Duval?"

"Dr. Duval is my friend."

"Enough. You propose to dodge the issue, I see. I shall get busy on your case in a hurry."

"Stay! I will tell all. I have no reason to lie about Duval. He has paid me only in promises in this business."

"You have had business with him before, I have no doubt."

"He is back of this Richardson matter, if you want to know."

"What I want to know is what has become of the child Helen Ramsay?"

"Duval took her away. I don't know where. That's honest. I insisted that I should not be told."

"How did it come about?"

"Through Mrs. Hunt."

"She made a confidant of you?"

"Sure. We were on the best of terms till——till——"

"Till you sold her out to Duval?"

"Yes. He heard of those letters she had been writing and came to me. He is acting for a man name Porter, who will be old Richardson's heir if the girl don't turn up."

"Do you know Porter?"

"No."

"How did the matter get started?"

"Mrs. Hunt is an English woman. The girl is not her child, but one she picked up in London. She had papers about her ancestry and was always trying to find this Richardson or his heir, claiming that the property really belonged to the child. One day to humor her I asked Duval to look the matter up. To my surprise, he told me that Richardson still lived at the age of a hundred. I told the woman and she began writing letters to the old fellow. She never got any answer, though."

"I follow you. Then Dr. Duval began to take a hand in the game?"

"Yes. That was last week. He had seen Porter and made some sort of deal with him. I agreed to give up the girl to him and keep Mrs. Hunt locked in till he could work the job through. That is all I know."

"Is the girl dead or alive?"

"Alive, I have every reason to believe. Duval told me he would keep her alive and hold her as a big stick over Porter's head until the old man croaked. Then she was to be brought back to my place if all went well."

"And disposed of in your usual style?"

Dr. Slimsides shrugged his shoulders.

"I have told all I know," he replied. "As to ringing myself in on the job I won't do it. You can get Mrs. Hunt any time, of course."

"Does she know any more than you have told me?"

"She knows nothing at all. She intended to go this week to New York and engage a lawyer to look the matter up. When we spirited away the child she was furious, and I gave orders that she should not be allowed to leave the house. She had the run of the place until after you telephoned. When I heard what she was saying over the wire I locked her up."

"How do you suppose we could get at the hiding place of the girl?"

"Can't tell you. The only way will be through Duval."

"Very well, doctor. I am satisfied with your answers, and I shall stick to my end of the bargain."

"Don't make any charge against me, Mr. Brady, and I will give you information about that boy's guardian which will railroad him to State's prison and put young Martin in possession of millions."

"We'll see about that," replied the old detective; "but in the meantime, Dr. Slimsides, you go to jail."

"Well," replied the doctor, "at any rate they can't hang me for a murder I never did."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BRADYS GO TO WELLPORT.

Harry returned after a while, accompanied by the Constable of the town of Glen Cove.

He brought with him a suit of clothes for Charlie, into which the boy lost no time in getting.

Dr. Slimsides had now relapsed into sulky silence.

The Constable promptly put him under arrest, for Harry had already told him the whole story, as Old King Brady had instructed him to do.

"Will you appear against this man, Mr. Brady?" asked the Constable. "He has been suspected of this sort of business for a long time."

"I certainly shall," replied the old detective, "but as for any suspicions you may have against him I know

nothing, nor shall I interest myself outside of the case of this boy."

"I guess that will be enough to fix him," chuckled the Constable. "I believe myself that every one of the escapes he has reported have been murders done this same way. We have been laying for the old sinner. He would have been caught sooner or later, even if you hadn't come along."

They all went aboard the boat then and were pulled over to Glen Cove, where Dr. Slimsides was promptly jailed.

As the Constable agreed to see that the boat was returned to the hotel keeper at Glenwood, the Bradys were left free to attend to their own affairs.

"Are you going back to the sanitarium after the Hunt woman, Governor?" inquired Harry.

"Not at all," replied Old King Brady. "That's the business of the authorities. I spoke to the Constable while you were making the boat fast. He will arrest the woman and hold her at our disposal. When we want her we shall know just where to go."

"And where do we go?"

"Home."

And so the Bradys returned to the old house on Washington Square, where they have kept bachelors' hall for several years.

Charlie Martin accompanied them, of course.

The first thing done was for Harry to take him to a clothing store, where he was fitted out with everything he needed.

"Now, boy," said Old King Brady when they returned, "you stick close to the house here till we can get a chance to take up your case, which may not be for several days."

Charlie promised to obey and expressed again the deepest gratitude to the Bradys for what they had done.

"And now, Harry," said the old detective, taking his partner aside, "we have got to get busy again. First thing is to find out whether death has cut in ahead of us in this race. Hurry up to Mr. Richardson's, and telephone me. I will then tell you what to do next."

"Shall I try to see the old man?" demanded Harry.

"No; it is not necessary unless he wishes it."

"You are going to see Dr. Duval?"

"I haven't made up my mind yet. I am going to think about it. Do as I say."

So Harry went up town.

Sam, the old darky, answered the bell.

He informed Harry that Mr. Richardson was much the same and was then asleep.

He reported, however, that soon after the Bradys left the day before he sent word to Dr. Duval that he need not come any more, and also sent for a new doctor, a young man named Rice, living on the block.

The lawyer had not been sent for.

Harry asked Sam what the lawyer's name was, but he did not know.

He said, further, that Dr. Rice had told him that it was

not likely that even under the most favorable circumstances Mr. Richardson could live more than a few days.

Harry hurried to the nearest drug store and communicated this information to Old King Brady over the telephone.

"Right!" came the answer. "I am glad there has been a change of doctors. Meet me at the Flatbush avenue station of the Long Island road at one o'clock."

"All right," replied Harry.

As Old King Brady did not tell the reason of the request, he did not ask.

Promptly on time Harry appeared at the station.

Old King Brady was pacing up and down before the unfinished building, which has now, owing to subway building operations, been in a chaotic state for several years.

"What's the word now?" he inquired.

"I have a telephone message from our Constable," replied Old King Brady. "He thinks he has located the girl."

"So? Where?"

"At Wellport, out on the south side of Long Island."

"How did he get next?"

"Through the man McCormick, whom they arrested at Baywood Retreat."

"They got Mrs. Hunt?"

"Yes; they have her jailed."

"What did McCormick say?"

"They had no trouble in getting the fellow. When they raided the asylum, which they did right away after we had left, they found that he had fled, but fortunately he was captured at Roslyn station by aid of the telephone. The Constable took him in charge there."

"But what did he say about the girl?"

"He said that he understood from Dr. Duval's man that she had been taken to the house of a Mrs. McGarry, at Wellport. The Constable seemed to have no doubt that we would find her there."

"I hope it is all straight, Governor."

"Great Scott, Harry! How can it be otherwise than straight when it came direct from the Constable?"

"But it started from McCormick. Indeed, for all we know it may turn out that McCormick was hired to tell this in case of trouble, and that after all we are dealing with Dr. Duval."

"Harry, you are too suspicious."

So Young King Brady, not wishing to start an argument, let it go at this.

But the fact is that there are times when the old detective is not suspicious enough.

So the Bradys ran down to Wellport.

It was a two hours' ride.

The storm threatening the night before had now come.

It was raining heavily when the Bradys left the car and there was a strong wind blowing from the east.

Wellport, as a town, amounts to nothing.

There is something doing in the summer boarder line,

but this business is confined to the fishermen and farmers. Some years before a hotel had been started on Wellport Point, but the company had failed and the building stood at the end of the desolate point in an unfinished condition.

On the point of land on the other side of the little harbor was a fishing box belonging to some Brooklyn club, and near it an old house which in former days had been used by a gang of smugglers.

We have described all this in order that what comes later may be made plain.

The Bradys, as it happened, had never stopped off at Wellport before.

Thus they knew nothing at all about the place.

They were the only passengers to leave the train.

The rain had driven all the usual loungers indoors, and there was only one man standing on the platform except the agent, who hurried inside as quick as he could.

The Bradys raised umbrellas and looked about.

There was no sign of a hotel.

The only building open to the public was a store across the country road which ran parallel with the tracks.

"Lively looking spot," growled Harry. "I wonder in which direction this McGarry woman lives?"

"We will tackle this native," replied the old detective, advancing towards the man.

He was a typical specimen of a Long Island clam-digger.

A tall, thin, slab-sided fellow, poorly dressed, with a red goat's beard, well watered by tobacco juice, dangling from his chin.

He looked searchingly at the detectives, but did not speak.

"My friend," said Old King Brady, "can you tell us where Mrs. McGarry lives?"

"Naw," replied the clam-digger. "No sich pusson in town."

"Are you sure?"

"Naw."

"Well, of whom shall we inquire to make sure?"

"Might ax at the store. She might be one of the summer boarders. I dunno."

"I don't think she is a boarder," returned Old King Brady. "I understand that she has a house here."

"Dunno nawthing erbout no sich a pusson."

The clam-digger appeared to be altogether a hopeless proposition.

The Bradys crossed over to the store.

This proved to be also the post-office, and the store-keeper was busy sorting the mail.

"We have come to the right place for information, I fancy," said the old detective. "Just wait till he gets through with those letters, and I'll ask."

The postmaster proved to be a pleasant spoken man.

"McGarry? McGarry?" he said. "I know of no such person in Wellport."

"We have been fooled, just as I expected," thought Harry, but he kept his thoughts to himself.

"Isn't it possible that she may be some newcomer?" questioned the old detective.

"It is, of course," was the reply. "But I know of no place into which anyone could move. There isn't a house to rent in town. Do you know of any, George?"

This to a pimply-faced clerk who was weighing sugar for a little girl.

"No, I dunno as I do," was the reply. "Hold on, though. Seems to me I did hear that someone had moved into the old Conover Place down on the Point."

"The smuggler's house?"

"Yes."

"I hain't heard nothing about it. When was that?"

"Two or three days ago. Job Stryker was a-tellin' me."

"Then if Job was telling you it must be so," laughed the postmaster, "for if Job is nothing else he is sure the biggest liar in town."

"If I could find this individual," began the old detective.

"There he comes now!" exclaimed the storekeeper.

And who should enter but the clam-digger.

He was dripping wet, but he did not seem to mind it.

Taking off the old felt hat, the brim of which hung down all around his head, he shook the water out of it, and drawled:

"Say, mister, I've located Mrs. McGarry for yer. She's jest moved into the smuggler's house deown on the p'int. She an' a little gal."

CHAPTER X.

UP AGAINST DEATH.

"Your statement seems to be corroborated, young man," Old King Brady remarked.

"He told me," said George, jerking his thumb toward Job.

"Yas," said the clamdigger, "I didn't know the name, so I went and axed George Sammis. He druv the woman's things over from Jericho, whar she come from. He says it's McGarry. That's all I know."

"How can we get to this house?" asked Old King Brady.

"I don't know of any other way but by a rowboat a day like this," said the postmaster. "You can reach it by an old wagon road on a dry day, but in a rain the quicksand is too dangerous. Don't you think so, Job?"

"Sure," replied the clam-digger. "Chances are you'd drop the wagon to the hubs. No horse could ever git through."

"We shall have to get a boat, then," said Old King Brady. "Where can we ask?"

"Don't think anyone would lend you a boat a day like this," said the storekeeper. "It's blowing great guns, and it's going to blow harder. It will be a rough night."

"But I must see this woman if I have to walk. I have important business with her."

"Well, Job!" said the storekeeper, "it is up to you."

"I've got a boat, mister," said the clam-digger, "but I don't keer to hire it eout fer fear it would never come back again, nor you nuther, and I would be held to blame; but ef yew'll pay me enough I'll row you out and back myself."

"Just the thing," replied the old detective. "What would you charge?"

"Heow would a dollar and a harf strike yer?"

"It strikes me so light that I'll make it two dollars. Let us start as soon as possible."

"Come with me," said Job, and he led them down to the shore.

The boat proved to be a good one.

Job dragged it out from under the barberry bushes where it had been placed to keep it safe from rising tide and the sun.

"Don't use it so much these days," he drawled. "Some folks believe in hitching to a stake, and keepin' her in the water. So do I, but the sand is so blame treacherous here that I have lost two boats that way, stake and all."

"Better to be sure than sorry," replied the old detective. "Can we see the house from here?"

"Yas. There it stands back of the club-house on the p'int. You kin jest see the chimbly. It sets in a holler: that's why you kean't see the hull house."

"Strange place for a woman to live alone in," remarked Harry. "Has she no husband?"

"I hear not. I hear she was put out for not payin' her rent where she lived. I guess she had to do the best she could, so she tuk up down thar."

"What is that large unfinished building I see on the other side of the bay?" Old King Brady asked.

"Oh, that's the hotel."

"Yes? Is it running?"

"Runnin' to waste. The builder run away and the company busted."

"And who does it belong to?"

"To a New York doctor."

"So? What's the name?"

"Dr. Duval. He has a summer place further along the shore. He owns a lot of property around here. Yer see, he held the mortgage on to the hotel, and when it was foreclosed he bid it in. Had to, I guess. Heard say there warn't no other bid."

Evidently the real estate boom in Wellport was yet to come.

By this time the Bradys were well out on the bay.

The length of the sand spits which formed the two arms of the harbor was not over a mile.

Job Stryker pulled a good oar, and although the Bradys sat under their umbrellas, the clam-digger scorned any such protection, declaring that he did not mind the rain a bit.

By this time even Harry felt satisfied that no mistake had been made in coming to Wellport.

Since Dr. Duval owned property here and made the

place his summer home, it seemed very probable that he would choose this deserted house to help forward his nefarious designs.

Job kept steadily at it, and in due time the boat pulled up at the swimming float alongside the building of the fishing club.

This was but a small affair.

It rested on a platform built on piles, and there were boats moored beneath it.

Behind was a stretch of salt marsh beyond which they could see the old house.

It was a ruinous affair, and looked as if it might have been deserted for years.

"How on earth are we to get there, Mr. Stryker?" Old King Brady asked.

"Oh, there's a ridge of hard ground running through that 'ere swamp," replied the clam-digger. "But say, will yer come up on the platform here for a minute. I'm caretaker of this club-house. While I am here I may as well see if everything is all right, I s'pose."

Old King Brady climbed the little ladder, and walked to the front of the platform, Harry following.

Job came trailing behind.

"Yas, this here belongs to a lot of Brooklyn boys," he said in a loud voice. "I'll open the door and you shall hev a look."

But before Job could get to the door it flew open, and out rushed three men.

Quick as lightning they flung themselves upon the detectives, who were taken entirely unawares.

Old King Brady had no show whatever.

A stunning blow between the eyes sent him sprawling at the very start.

Harry, on the contrary, put up a fight, and all the more strenuous a one when he saw his chief go down.

But it was no use!

The treacherous clam-digger set upon him from behind.

In the end Harry was knocked out, too, but not until he had broken the nose of one of his assailants, and blackened the eye of another.

It ended in the Bradys being bound hand and foot, and dragged into the fishing-box.

Here in a back room they were laid out on the floor, and left to themselves.

By this time Old King Brady, who was completely knocked out at the start, had recovered himself.

Harry asked him how he felt, and then there was silence for some little time.

Meanwhile the murmur of voices could be heard in the big room beyond, showing that their captors had no intention of departing.

"Harry," said the old detective at last, "this is simply a beastly turn of affairs, and I want to say, my boy, that it is wholly and entirely my own fault."

"Oh, I don't know that you need lay it all to yourself,

Governor, if it comes to that; I am quite as much to blame."

"It is very nice of you to say so, but it isn't true at all. The fault is mine."

"Well, it can't be helped."

"No; but there is a lesson to be drawn from it. We want to understand what it all means."

"It means that Dr. Duval arranged to have this false clew thrown to us, and——"

"And that I swallowed the bait, hook and all."

"It was probably done by telephone. No doubt that man McCormick called up the doctor as soon as he found that we had captured Dr. Slimsides, and was told to make that statement."

"That the little Ramsay girl had been brought down here. Yes, I believe it is so."

"But how did he get at Job Stryker to arrange this end of the plot?"

"I don't doubt that that was done before."

"And while Job was away from us, or, rather, while we were talking to the storekeeper, he sent these fellows on ahead to be ready to capture us."

Thus the Bradys sized up the situation.

There was silence for a few minutes, after which Old King Brady began again.

"You may think, Harry," he said, "that all this indicates that the girl is not concealed somewhere down around here, but just the same I don't believe it. My opinion is that she is here, and in all probability her hiding-place is in the old hotel on the other side of the bay."

"It may be so. I am sure I don't see what we are going to do."

"We can do nothing as it is. We must simply wait, unless you can find some means of working yourself free."

"It's more than I can do."

"With me the case is hopeless."

"Then all we can do is to grin and bear it for the present. Later, perhaps, matters will take a different turn."

And so the Bradys lay there waiting.

After awhile they heard someone pull away in a boat. Nobody came near them.

The voices outside grew louder and louder.

The three men were playing poker.

It was also evident that they were filling up on something stronger than cider.

At last they began calling each other names, and a fierce fight followed.

The men went tumbling about on the floor.

The frail structure trembled as one and another fell.

It was a big drunk.

At last all sounds ceased.

"There is no one watching now," declared Harry. "Those three scoundrels are dead to the world."

"It would be our time if we could only get loose," said the old detective.

It was not to be.

Harry's hands are unusually small, and he has a trick of compressing them still smaller.

It would not work on this occasion, however.

Night came on, and the Bradys' situation had not changed.

At last the storm seemed to die down, and the rattle of the rain was no longer heard.

Some time after this the Bradys caught the sound of oars, and soon they heard two men come up on the platform of the fishing box.

They entered the long room.

"Well, well, well! This is pretty business!" a voice exclaimed. "And are these drunken beasts the fellows you left in charge, Job? No doubt the Bradys have escaped long ago."

Then the door opened, and in walked Dr. Duval.

Old King Brady had recognized his voice outside.

He had determined to take the bull by the horns, and try what bluff would do.

"Ah, doctor," he exclaimed, "it is you, is it? Just as I thought. It seems that from first to last our dealings have been with Dr. Duval."

The dark, sinister face of the physician grew darker still.

"You are right," he said. "I gave you fair warning, but you would not heed it. I allow no one to interfere with my plans, as you have now learned."

"Yes, as we have now learned to our cost. It was a mistake, doctor. We realize that now."

"That it is too late."

"Are you certain that it is too late? There are ways and ways of arranging these things."

"Time has passed for that, Brady. At the outset I might have been willing to pay you a good round sum to take your hands out of this pie and let Death take old man Richardson quietly, but now you know too much. You are a common meddler, old man. Your hand is in everybody's business. I don't propose to leave you alive to interfere with mine. Your time has come, gentlemen. In ten minutes you die."

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRADYS BEAT DEATH.

Dr. Duval glared at the Bradys as he made this threat, and producing a cigar, thrust it into his mouth, and without lighting it began to walk up and down, chewing the end.

"Of course," remarked Old King Brady, as quietly as if he was discussing the most casual matter. "You can kill us if you wish, Dr. Duval, but to my mind it seems just a shade risky."

"Why?"

"Because our coming to this place is known in Wellport, and——"

"All provided for. Do you take me for a fool?"

"But——"

"Stop! You are wasting the moments which I gave you for reflection. It is no use, Mr. Brady. You have crossed my path; you have put my friend, Dr. Slimsides, out of business, and very likely it will end in his going to the electric chair; you have meddled with this Richardson matter just at the time when it was approaching success. As matters stand now I simply cannot afford to do business with you or to let you live."

"But——"

"There are no buts about it."

"If you would let me talk."

"I won't. Here, Job! Job! This old fool hasn't any prayers to say; let's bring this matter to a finish. Come in."

The clam-digger came straggling in, then.

Job had evidently been imbibing.

He looked more dilapidated and shifty than ever.

"Waal, doc," he drawled, "it's jest as I told yer. The way to do a thing is to do it, and when you've once made up yer mind to do a thing the sooner you go and do it the better, I say."

"Do it, then," said the doctor. "I'll go outside and wait. I don't care to be a witness to what goes on here."

"Right," replied Job. "The job will be done up slick. Don't you fret."

Dr. Duval walked out then.

Old King Brady tried to appeal to the clam-digger, and Harry joined in threats and promises.

It was simply useless.

Job paid not the slightest attention to them.

Going over to one corner of the room, he pulled up a long trap-door.

This was big enough to pull a boat through, and was doubtless used to raise the boats from below at the end of the season so as to stow them away.

Having raised this trap, Job calmly rolled Harry into it.

"Thar!" he exclaimed. "One out. When the tide ebbs he'll be carried to sea all right. Now it's your turn, old man. He, he, he! You didn't know that I was a-watchin' for yer at the train when yer spoke to me. Pretty slick job, I think. I worked it up all right. There don't nobody get the best of Job Stryker. No, no!"

Thus congratulating himself, the clam-digger rolled Old King Brady down through the opening, and closed the trap-door.

So far as he and Dr. Duval were concerned the job was now finished, and so, indeed, it would have been but for a lucky circumstance which intervened to save the lives of the Bradys, as will now be shown.

When Harry went down through the trap he fully expected death.

But instead of landing in the water he dropped on something soft.

Instantly a pair of strong arms seized him and lifted him into a boat.

"It's all right, boss," a voice whispered. "Jest keep cool, an' I'll save you both."

Harry caught his breath.

It was so dark under the building that he could barely make out the big powerful fellow who had lifted him up as easily as if he had been a baby.

A moment more and Old King Brady dropped.

He landed in a long boat from which the seats had been removed, and two or three old coats were piled.

These broke the force of the old detective's fall.

"Don't make no noise, boss. We're gotter lie low hyar till dey go away. Den it will be all right, suah."

"A darky," thought Harry. "This is great luck."

"Cut us free," breathed Old King Brady, who had been considerably shaken up by his fall. "Whoever you are, friend, be sure that you will be well paid for this."

"Dat's all right," was the answer. "I'se de kinder man who takes what's comin', all de same. I'll be well paid if I can succeed in circumflustrating dat air black scoundrel, Doctah Duval."

Having said this, the colored man produced a knife and cut Old King Brady's bonds, performing the same acceptable office for Harry a minute later.

Meanwhile there was some noise and talk above.

Through the wide cracks in the floor every word spoken could be distinctly heard.

"You are sure it is all right, Job?" demanded Dr. Duval.

"Of course it is," replied the clam-digger. "I don't make mistakes."

"There's no danger of them dropping into a boat or anything?"

"Not a bit. I moved the boats out of the way; there's only two of 'em, anyhow."

"Correct! What shall we do with these drunken brutes?"

"Leave 'em whar they be, I say."

"Probably it's best. Well, pull me over to the hotel, Job, and I'll see if we can't find some money for you when we get there."

Peering out from under the clubhouse, the Bradys and their companion saw Dr. Duval and Job Stryker enter the boat and pull off across the bay.

"And now is the time we can talk," exclaimed the old detective. "You have saved our lives, my friend, and I would like to know who you are."

"Waal, boss, I'se Gus Johnsing," replied the colored man. "Dat air my name, an' my bizness, dat's none of yourn."

"Surely not. We don't want to know it. If you are doing a little quiet smuggling it don't concern us at all."

"I knowed you'd say it dat way. I've heard all about you, Mr. Brady. Waal, sah, de case am like dis yere. I'se had trouble wid Doctah Duval. He's a man what I hate. I come in under hyer dis afternoon for to get a sleep an'

I heered Joby Stryker overhead a plotting with dem tree fellers what's drunk up dere now to do you up to-night—see?"

"I follow you."

"Waal, sah, I jest made up mah mind as how I'd circumflustrate dere game, an' so I done it. I'se been a-layin' under hyer dis long time a-waitin' for jest dis yere occurrence—see!"

"Well, I am sure, Gus, that we are very deeply indebted to you," replied Old King Brady. "Before we part I'm going to give you two hundred dollars for this job, and if you can help us out in another matter there will be three hundred more coming. Do you follow me?"

"Puffectly, boss! Puffectly, I t'ink. I knows what dat air odder mattah am."

"Well?"

"Waal, sah, ef it don't relate to dat air little gal what Doctah Duval has got hid in de new hotel across de bay den I don't know nuffin' at all."

"So? You know, then, that there is a girl hidden over there?"

"I do. Mah sister has her in charge."

"Good! What's her name?"

"Helen Ramsay."

"You can earn that \$300, Gus. You will take us there? You will help us to arrest Dr. Duval and rescue this child?"

"I will, boss, you bet."

"Then, my friend, you are good for \$500 for your work to-night."

"Which will suit me puffectly, boss; but I want you to 'stinctly understand that I take mo' satisfaction in circumflustrating de plans of Doctah Duval dan I do in earning dis yere cash."

"You get both satisfaction and money, Gus; but now we must think what we had better do."

"We want to make sure of Dr. Duval," said Harry. "We don't want to let this thing go on any further, I should say."

"Quite so," replied Old King Brady. "Let us resolve ourselves into a committee of ways and means. Gus, do you live at Wellport?"

"Uster, boss. Don't now. No matter whar I live."

"You know the postmaster?"

"Mr. Sammis?"

"Yes."

"Sure."

"Is he afraid of Dr. Duval?"

"Yo' bet he ain't. He hates him."

"Just so. Who is Constable over there?"

"Sammis is."

"Better yet. Now I will propose a plan. See if it can be carried out. First, you pull me over to the hotel and leave me there. Then you take my partner to Wellport, where he can arrange it so that as soon as it is daylight, with the Constable's help, we can come down on Dr. Duval, who will hardly make any move to-night."

"Dat air sounds well, boss, but I kin improve on it, I t'ink."

"Well?"

"It wouldn't be healthy for me to go to Wellport. Ef I could meet Boss Sammis along with yo', perhaps you could 'suade him to let me alone; odderwise it wouldn't be safe to make de 'tempt."

"Very good. I see."

"Den, 'stead of taking youse both to de hotel I say lemme take you to a house I know nearer Wellport, on de odder side of de bay. Dar libs a good friend of mine an' de young feller kin hire a hoss an' ride to Wellport, while I take you on to de hotel an' we kin get in our fine work dar an' be ready fo' him an' Boss Sammis when dey come."

"That would be better. I think your amendment is all right, Gus," Old King Brady replied. "Harry, what do you say?"

"It's all right if you will only stay quiet till we can get along," replied Harry; "but if you have to go buttin' in alone and are going to get yourself captured again, then I don't approve."

"Come," said the old detective, "I'll promise to be good."

"I'se t'inking dat we had better be gwine now," said Gus. "Dem fellers has put erway pretty good jags, but de 'fects ob de whisky hain't lost forebber. Dey may wake up; den dere's liable to be trubble, dough I s'pose you're armed all right."

The Bradys had been searched when captured and the revolvers they carried in their hip pockets taken from them.

But the detectives have other pockets where searchers seldom get and both were still in possession of revolvers, as it happened.

"It's all right," replied Old King Brady. "We will get on the move now, Gus. Just as soon as we get where we can see you get your \$200; the balance comes your way when the job is done."

To this the man assented, and he pulled the Bradys out from under the fishing box and started across the bay.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Once more in their race with death the Bradys had come out winners.

This time it was their own lives which had been at stake.

As the detectives subsequently learned, their suspicions in regard to their rescuer were quite correct.

Gus Johnson had been caretaker at the unfinished hotel and in the employ of Dr. Duval.

Having previously been in the smuggling line, Gus went into it again, and through Dr. Duval was turned over to the tender mercies of the law.

He was now but just out of prison, back at his old ways again and very savage on the subject of the doctor, as a matter of course.

It was less than a quarter of a mile across the bay.

Gus landed the Bradys at the head of a little cove, where there was a hut occupied by colored people.

A word from Gus proved sufficient to enable Harry to secure a really good horse, and the old detective saw him start for Wellport.

Harry's intentions were not to attempt to return until morning.

It would be light by four o'clock and at that hour it was arranged that he should turn up at the unfinished hotel with the Constable, if nothing occurred to prevent.

As there was time to spare, Old King Brady took his place in the boat, leaving Gus with his friends in the hut.

The storm had now passed and every star was out.

Old King Brady made no attempt to sleep, but remained on the watch until about half-past two, when he went to the hut, hammered on the door and brought out Gus.

"Time we were on the move," he said.

"Specs it am, boss," replied the smuggler. "Waal, I'se all ready. Let's be ergwine."

He unfastened the boat and pulled away along the line of the shore, coming abreast the unfinished hotel in about twenty minutes' time.

"Do you imagine the doctor is alone in there, Gus?" questioned the old detective.

"Dat's what I t'ink, boss. He come down hyar alone. Him family dey hain't come to him house yet awhile. Yes, I t'ink he done stop dar. Means to ketch de early morning train."

"I see no lights."

"Dey wouldn't show any. Dey's rooms in de middle ob de house, an' it's in one ob dem dat mah sister has got de little gal locked in."

"What do you propose we shall do?"

"I t'ink I better get in dere fust and let her know how the cat am a-jumpin'."

"Will she sell out the doctor, think?"

"I know she will. He daon' nebber pay nuffin' of no consekence. I shall tell her what a liberal gem'n you are."

"Very well," replied the old detective. "Go on, and I will wait here for your return."

They had pulled the boat up on the beach, where there was no danger of its being seen.

Gus now started for the hotel.

Old King Brady trailed after him, anxious to see how the place looked.

The long frame structure faced the Great South Bay, and stood back some two hundred feet from the beach.

The central part had been about completed, but both wings were in an unfinished condition.

The roof was not even on the right wing, and the scaffold was still in place.

No other house was in sight, and the place was lonely to the last degree.

"An ideal spot for the doctor to work his game," thought Old King Brady. "Shrewd scheme that, to bring us down here and do us up. Something quite original, really. Clever man, this Dr. Duval."

Gus had gone on ahead, and the old detective saw him vanish through one of the windows of the unroofed wing.

The gray of dawn was just visible in the east.

Old King Brady looked at his watch.

It wanted twenty minutes to four o'clock.

"Almost time for Harry to show up," he said to himself. "This case will soon be brought to a head, but how about old man Richardson? Not until I can produce the girl at his bedside and see the will in her favor signed can I be sure that I have won my race with death."

Skirting along the fringe of bayberry bushes, Old King Brady struck the road leading back along the point toward Wellport.

He walked a few hundred yards in that direction.

It seemed to him that he could hear the rattle of wheels.

This proved to be a fact.

In a moment a wagon with two men appeared in the distance.

Behind was a man mounted on a horse.

"They are coming! The boy has succeeded," thought Old King Brady. "He stepped into the middle of the road, and waved the old white hat."

Harry caught the signal, and understood its import.

The driver of the wagon reined in, and the men dismounted.

So did Harry, and having secured their horses to trees, they came ahead on foot.

Old King Brady advanced to meet them.

It was the postmaster and another man.

"This is Mr. Sammis, Governor," said Harry. "He is ready to arrest Dr. Duval."

"You bet I am, and only too glad to get the chance," added Sammis. "He is a big scoundrel. We all know it down here. So he tried to murder you, did he? I hope you'll put the screws on him. I'd throw up my hat if I could know that Ike Duval was hammering stone at last."

"I think his time has come, all right," replied the old detective. "Do you know all about this business, Mr. Sammis?"

"Your partner has told me everything."

"Good! And you are quite ready to make this arrest?"

"As I just said."

"It is all right. I am not sure yet that the doctor is here, but we shall soon know. Follow me, gentlemen. One thing more, constable. I hope you won't bother this man Gus Johnson. He saved our lives."

"That is understood," said Harry.

"I shan't interfere with him," added the constable. "Gus is a smuggler and a hard boy, but he's got a kind

heart. I'm not particularly down on him. I am prepared to forget that I ever met him here to-day."

"Right," replied Old King Brady. "Here he comes now."

Gus had caught sight of them.

Old King Brady beckoned and he came hurrying up.

"How are yer, Gus!" said the constable. "So you are still alive."

"Waal, yo' bet, Massa Sammis. I don't die afore I have ter. Yah! Yah! Yah!" chuckled Gus.

"What's the word?" demanded Old King Brady.

"It am all right. Doc's dar, sleepin' in a room what he fixed up for himself last year. De gal's dar, too. She done ben sick. She hain't much better now. Mah sister she specs as how de doctah's medicine hain't done her no good."

"Poison, like enough," replied Old King Brady. "You can take us to the doctor's room?"

"Right now, gem'n."

"Then lead on, and we will finish this job up in short order," Old King Brady replied.

Gus led them in through the same window he had used himself.

"Harry," said Old King Brady, "if the child is sick you had better stay behind. Bring up the horse. You can take her and ride fast to the nearest doctor. We must not lose her now."

So Young King Brady held back.

The old detective and the others followed Gus Johnson through into the main building.

Ascending a flight of unfinished stairs, Gus pointed out a door.

"Dat ar's de room," he whispered. "When you done ketch him come along down dis yere hall, an' yo'll find me a-waitin' at de do'."

Old King Brady and the constable made short work of the business.

Finding the door locked, they threw themselves against it, burst it in, and confronted Dr. Duval with cocked revolvers.

The doctor was sound asleep when the crash came, and was consequently taken entirely by surprise.

"You!" he gasped, sitting up in bed.

"Yes, doctor! The dead come to life again!" cried the old detective. "You are under arrest, man! Up and dress. This is the day you go to jail."

It is needless to repeat all that passed.

Pulling out and leaving the prisoner to the constable, Old King Brady pushed on down the corridor, to find Gus coming out of a room with a little girl in his arms, wrapped in a shawl.

The child seemed to be delirious, and was moaning piteously.

Old King Brady took her in his arms and hurried downstairs to the open, where Harry had just come up with the horse.

He was closely followed by Mr. Sammis and his assistant, who led Dr. Duval between them.

The doctor seemed completely cowed now, and not disposed to talk.

"Here, take the poor child, Harry!" said Old King Brady, passing the girl up to his partner.

"Hold that horse still," he added, for the animal was beginning to jump about.

Dr. Duval stood glaring between the two men.

The constable gave Harry directions how to reach the nearest doctor, and Young King Brady rode away.

Dr. Duval was then handcuffed, and taken to the wagon.

Old King Brady settled with Gus Johnson, giving the fellow an extra hundred for his sister.

He then departed with his prisoner, and having seen him safely lodged in jail, joined Harry at the doctor's.

Here he learned that little Helen's condition was by no means serious.

The child had been simply drugged to keep her quiet—nothing more.

By the time the first train started for New York she had so far recovered that the Bradys took her with them, and engaging a cab at 34th street ferry-house, drove at once to Mr. Richardson's.

They were met by Sam at the door.

The old darky's eyes were red with weeping.

"Youse too late, boss!" he said. "Ole marse he died an hour ago."

And so it proved.

The Bradys had lost in their race with death!

But as it turned out it made no difference to little Helen.

The evening before Albert Richardson sent for his lawyer, one of the best known in the city.

He executed a new will, cutting Henry Porter off altogether, and leaving everything to Helen Ramsay, providing Old King Brady found himself able to prove that she was his great-granddaughter.

Failing this, his estate, with provisions for his faithful servants, was left to the University of Virginia.

But the university never got the money.

Dr. Slimsides' housekeeper was released, and brought to New York.

In her possession the woman held papers absolutely proving the identity of the child, whose mother she had nursed in London.

It was all straight, and the lawyer had no difficulty in establishing little Helen's claim.

A guardian was appointed for her by the court, and in due time Helen Ramsay will come into the possession of millions.

At present she is in charge of Hannah Hunt, the woman having proved herself fairly reliable, and Helen being devoted to her.

Old King Brady, immediately after the funeral, took up Charlie Martin's case.

At the first alarm the boy's treacherous cousin fled to South America.

The California courts appointed a new guardian for Charlie, who returned to San Francisco, where he is now at school.

He frequently writes to Harry, to whom he took a great fancy.

From the boy's new guardian the Bradys received a substantial reward.

Dr. Slimsides had a close call from the electric chair.

His business was all broken up, and when his books came to be examined it was found that he had not only had extensive dealings with Dr. Duval, but also with several other fashionable physicians in New York.

Five patients, all women, were found in his retreat who were entirely sane.

As it was, the doctor got twenty years, and is in Sing Sing now.

If Old King Brady had chosen to exert himself it might have meant death to this scoundrel, but true to his promise, the old detective made no such move.

With Dr. Duval the case was different.

The man was promptly admitted to bail, and then he developed a big political pull.

Again and again his case was postponed.

Old King Brady followed it up, and tried his best.

It was useless.

Job Stryker had vanished. Gus Johnson also disappeared, as well as the three toughs who had attacked the Bradys at the fishing-box. There was no proof.

So Dr. Duval escaped.

But his practice was all broken up.

He left New York, and has never returned.

Mr. Richardson left the detective \$5,000 in his will in case they succeeded in proving the identity of little Helen.

This they had done, and in about a year they got their money, which was the last of the case which we have styled *The Bradys' Race With Death*.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND DR. SAM SUEY SOY; OR, HOT WORK ON A CHINESE CLEW," which will be the next number (393) of "Secret Service."

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